PHILOSOPHY OF GURU NANAK

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Dedicated
to
My Spiritual Master
Sadguru Sri Srinivas Vyankatesha Datar

ॐ नमः पथिभ्यो पथिकृद्भ्यो नमः

Salutations to the Travellers, Salutations to the Teachers

PREFACE

IT GIVES me great pleasure to present this work to all those who love and want to know Truth and live truthfully. The aim of this book is to present systematically Guru Nanak Deva's philosophy of spiritual life by way of an exhaustive analysis of all the major utterances of that great Saint and Prophet who has moved millions toward the Path of God during the last five centuries and shall continue to do so. The task of constructing the philosophy of God-realization through a searching study of the vast and labyrinthine teachings of Guru Nanak was indeed a formidable one; and for a considerable time I could not, despite a deligent, detailed and devoted study of the works of the prophet, arrive at that synoptic view - point which would enable me to synthesize the many-sided *divya* 'Vani' of Nanak.

But when on the advice of my guide and on the inspirations received from the Spiritual Talks of Dr. V.H. Date (retired professor and head of the department of philosophy, University ofRajasthan, Jaipur) during Sunday Sittings at his residence, I read the monumental works of the great Prof. R.D Ranade, the Philosopher-Saint of Nimbal, I got, as it were, the golden key to unlock the mysteries of the life of the spirit as depicted by Guru Nanak. Prof. Ranade arrived at certain broad characteristics common to the Divine Pathway by way of a comparative study of the philosophies and religions of the world, and especially of the lives and teachings of those, who, in the various stages of humanity and in different ages, and lands, have walked the razor's edge of the Divine Path to God. In the first place, there are certain 'incentives' which prompt men to divine life. Secondly, they have to equip themselves intellectually and morally before they can hope to advance on the pathway. Thirdly, they have to keep before themselves certain exemplars of spiritual conduct and attainment, which they must necessarily follow. Finally, they have themselves to become pilgrims on the pathway, and traverse it with courage and confidence, with faith and perseverance, with feelings of love gratitude and surrender till the highest ideal is attained by them.

I have followed the same valuable method in my study of the great teachings of Nanak as has been indicated above, and so my deep-seated indebted to late Prof. Ranade is all too obvious. But so far as the central teachings and essential Gospel of Guru Nanak are concerned, no scholar has hitherto applied such a method as would bring out systematically the fundamental principles

underlying the life of the Spirit as taught and sung by the Master. It is in thus respect of the application of a unique method and a novel treatment and viewpoint to the study of "Nanak Vani" that I make a claim to some originality in all humility. Furthermore, it is as a result of the mystical viewpoint and the application of the above method of analysing and interpreting Nanak's teachings that a philosophy of God-realizations with a universal basis and appeal has emerged in the following pages. Nanak's philosophy is precisely the philosophy of God-realization, for that alone, says he, is the noblest purpose and the highest good attainable in human life. He, 'That One Omkar's whose creative Sound sustains the cosmos and whose divine Light smoulders in each human heart, has to be reckoned and realized within and without and all over My labours will be amply rewarded if the present work succeeds even in small measure in presenting Guru Nanak as agreat mystic Saint who, rising above all sectarianism, serves as a beacon light to the God-aspiring humanity on the glorious pathway to the Divine.

Ere I close, I would love to express my profound sense of gratitude to Dr. V.H. Date and Dr. M.L. Sharma without whose advice and spiritual inspirations it would have been difficult to see the Light dwelling into the innermost chambers of the forest-like dense expanse of the voluminous utterances of this Perfect Master. My heart, however, leaps to loiter in the lotus feet of my Great Beloved Sadguru Sri Srinivas Vyankatesha Datar of Hyderabad Deccan by whose Grace I had the vision of the subtlest meaning of some of the most sublime and profound proclamations of Guru Nanak Deva regarding the highest ascent in the realm of mystical life. In no less measure I am indebted to my Guru Bhai, Prof. D.D. Harsha who not only went through the whole manuscript and read the proofs but made valuable suggestions with love and extended all assistance in my hour of need. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not offer my hearty and grateful thanks to Usha Publishing House for their zeal and endeavour to publish this work.

In the end, I pray, let the Grace of Guru Nanak and the Saints and Seers of all times and climes be with us all ! In their blessings may we have the necessary mental and moral stamina, intell ectual poise and physical endurance to rip open the veils of the existing negatives in us and discover in ourselves the Truth of truths as enunciated in the Nanak Vani.

Guru Nanak Jayanti, 1980 **Guru Iqbal Singh**
JODHPUR

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The Mystical Rubric

**Ek Onkar Sat (i) Nam (u) Karta Purukh (u)
Nirbhau (u) Nirvair (u) Akala Murata (i)
Ajuni Saibhan Gurprasad (i)[1]**

Nanak belonged to the category of saints whose life was in perfect unison with that Eternal One who is the creator, sustainer and the destroyer of the universe. Lodged permanently in Him, Nanak became the happy instrument of the Divine utterance : "Ek Onkar Sat(i) Nam (u) Karta Purukh (u) Nirbhau (u) Nirvair (u) Akala Murata (i) Ajuni Saibhan Gurprasad(i)".

This divine utterance, which has had a long sequel of words of wide and deep spiritual import, constitutes what is called the "Mula Mantra' in the Sikh spiritual lore, or the 'mystical rubric'. These words, beginning with "Ek Onkara" and ending with 'gurprasad (i)', hold the key to the understanding of the voluminous 'vani' of Guru Nanak. These words are the epitome of the spiritual heights and mystical depths attained by Guru Nanak. A through understanding of these not only furnishes the proper perspective necessary for comprehending Nanak's view of the world and life, but sums up quite succintly and subtly the very heart and soul of the mystic's vision of the supreme, i.e., of God, the ultimate Reality. The entire compendium of the Sikh spiritual literature known as '*Guru Grantha Sahid*' is in a way, a highly rational as well as spiritual exposition of this very mystical rubric. That is why everybody initiated into the sikh way of life has first of all to commit this very sacred saying to his or her memory and to daily meditate upon it. There is no Sikh who does not follow this injunction. As a matter of fact, the very "Grantha Sahib", the Bible of the Sikh community, begins with this red-letter mystical maxim. It is the crowning jewel of Nanak's realisation of the Supreme, the cream of the spiritual literature of mankind, the ineffable gist of a mystic's vision of the Real.

Since these words embody the essence of the idea of the Holy, they are, for the purpose of the present work, designated under the title the 'Mystical Rubric' and re-stated with a tentative, translation for arriving at their clear meaning, and spiritual significance.

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 79. Japa ji.—Dr. Jai Ram Mishra.

Ek	:	One
Onkara	:	Maker of Om (the Sound Creator)
Satinam (u)	:	Truth (is the) Name
Kartapurukh (u)	:	Creator (of existence) Lord (of non-existence)
Nirbhau (u)	:	Without Becoming
Nirvair (u)	:	Un-rivalled
Akal murat (i)	:	Embodiment of Eternity
Ajuni	:	Un-Wombed
Sehbhanga	:	Self-manifesting
Guru prasad (i)	:	By the Highest Grace.

These words are preceded by a significant word 'japa' which makes it imperative for any Sikh to 'meditate' upon or praise that "One who is the cause of Om (the sound creative), who is named Truth and is the creator (of existence, and) Lord (of non-existence), who is without becoming un-rivalled, embodiment of Eternity, Unwombed, (and) self-manifesting by (his own) High Grace". Let us elaborate this tentative translation of the mystical rubric word by word in order that we may be able to arrive at its true meaning and wider-spiritual significance in Nanak's Philosophy of God-realisation.

Ek. the One

There is One, universal Being. From the point of view of one who has not gone beyond the visible world what appears is real and appearances are uncountably many. Manyness seems obviously Real. From the point of view, however, of the other one who goes beyond the visible and dives deeper into what lies behind the world of appearances, the innumerable multitudes of finite faces are but the manifestions of that One who alone is Real. Reality is one and indivisible and omnipresent.

'One' connotes indivisibility and infinitude of the Real, and not as ex-chief justice Teja Singh says the Numerical[1] one which stands for 'a' thing which can be singled out. To speak of God as one in the numerical sense is to limit him quantitatively; He is infinite. To speak of Him correctly is to say God "is", EK, of Nanak's mystical rubric, is expressive of the invisible indivisible, omnipresent and infinite God, the universal Being, the Nirmalatma of the Advaitins.[2] This idea of Nanak's 'one', the universal Being, is not a metaphysical guess work or a philosophical speculation born merely

1. Guru Nanak,-Ex-Chief Justice Teja Singh, p. 18.
2. Spiritual Treasure in Dasbodh of Ramadas-by Dr. V.H. Date.

of the high rational flights; it is a spiritually realised or experienced reality.

That 'one' is certainly beyond expression or imagination, but 'that' does flash out in the experiences of the mystic. And such flashes are unfathomable to Reason. That is why even the Saints or mystics, have poured out through their utterances such experiences of the Divine that run into volumes, have to suffix their spiritual out flows with the words 'neti, neti', for the Infinite is completely ineffable in words of finite mould. The mystical oneness of the Real ever remains in all cases, and that is one permanent reason why all the mystics speak the language of the Advait a Vedantin. Silence is His name. It defies all descriptions but limitless as it is, it expresses itself in innumerable ways and forms.[1] Thus there arises a question: Are there many Gods or One ? Vedanta says one. He is one, not many; but He appears as many. He alone is. He is the inmost of all, of every thing at all places and times. In the visible multiplicity of things and beings all around there is only one pervading force or spirit 'He'; 'EK' the Eternal Being ever is. All selves are but one-self.

The question as yet remains unanswered and asserts itself in a different way. What is then the necessity of using the term 'EK' or one, if the Reality is one, the Indwelling life of all that exists before our eye in multiple forms? The use of this term presupposses that the existence of many, of atleast more than one. We may profitably recall the explicit proclamation made by Guru Nanak that, to the man of common rut of the world, 'duality' (dubidha) is the essence of man's life or problem. This 'dubidha', figuratively speaking, is the daughter of man's ego, the "haume" of Nanak's conception. And it is this ego that separates man from the One, casts a veil that obstructs his vision and there by gives him a distorted view of the world and life of duality. It is only when the ego is extinguished by the loving and regardful remembrance of God's Name, says, Nanak, that duality is destroyed and the life of pure and perfect unison developed. For, the realisation of the identity of the self with and the supreme self is a matter of long and continuous process and not "an event" as Prof. Ranade categorically put it. Only as a result of pure meditation on the Word (Sabda) regularly and with devotion, the aspirant can be able to root out his egoism, destroy dualism and realise the ultimate Reality as One and Infinite, as Imperishable and Indivisible, as Omniscient and Eternal, as Unmanifest and Sui Generis.

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1. The Message of Sikhism-by Harbans Singh, Rag Asa M. 1.

The term 'EK' thus implies the falseness of duality or plurality and is used only to bring home to the aspirant, on one hand, that his life of 'dubidha' is unreal and, therefore, full of misery and acute suffering and, on the other, that life of oneness with God alone is real and full of eternal light, peace and bliss. To know that one is to become that one.[1]

Onkara :

Only in the life of unison or oneness with Him, One can know the significance of the syllable "Om".

The unmanifest and the formless one is incomprehensible in His entirety. Only a glimpse of Him might be known and that too by completely merging with or losing one-self in Him. As a great mystic poet of Hindi literature has said "कबीरा देखा एक अंग". But how can one see or have a vision of Him? or why should the unmanifest God manifest himself before anyone ? It is interesting and wonderful to note that He reveals Himself tc only those who meditatively remember Him and hear his Name from within. Only through 'hearing' the divine Name attentively and with single minded devotion and love, one can be fortunate enough to have the beautiful vision of God, which becomes his fond memory to fall back upon for joyful concentration. It is said that God manifested Himself first of all in the form of a creative sound.[2]

Regarding this B. P. L. Bedi states thus: After thus difining the Almighty God as the One, the inner Eye of Sadguru's soul beheld the attributes of the One, and the very starting point of creator appears before his eye divine. And with the tongue of worshipful wonder, the Sadguru uttered the Word 'Onkar,' which means that He—the One, is the fountain from which emerged the 'sound creative'. By meditating on the Word i.e., 'Om', it may be possible to reach Him, the Giver of the sound, and be one with Him. By meditating on the Word it may be possible for the aspirant to sing praises in His glory and greatness and describe Him as embodiment of countless attributes the most significant of wh ch are already there in Nanak's mystical rubric. Verily, 'Om' is the symbolic key[3] to unlock the secret door of life spiritual, the final and the finest culmination whereof lies in the indivisible and absolute identity of the 'Atman' with the 'Brahman'. This is what is called liberation.

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1. The Japji—Kirpal Singh, p. 21, Rag Ramkali M. I.
2. Bada Nanak—B.P.L. Bedi, p. 39.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 516. Rag Ram Kali Dhakhani Onkar.—by Dr. Jai Ram Mishra.

Guru Nanak says: Out of the Om-form of God, the entire universe is created; Vedas are born; by befriending Om people have swum across the stormy sea of the worldly existence; and you should thus hear and ponder over this 'Imperishable Word'.[1] Briefly, Om is the source and strength and soul of all that exists; and, as such, one should know it to be free from cycle of births and deaths.

To meditate on this Word, says Nanak, is the greatest kind of 'Satsang' i.e., association of the truth. Om is the truth, and to ponder over it is to be in the company of the truth, the highest of the Holy, a company that has the power and charm of transforming the ponderer into its own Being Even the basest of the metals turns into best of the metals by the sheer touch of the dust of those who are in the company of the Holy-word.[2] Om is the nectar, everything else is venum To drink deep at this nectar cup is to be as immortal and free as God Himself is. To avoid it is to be drowned in the poison of mundane life; one should thus utter "Om" ceaselessly and be Om one-self. But, says Nanak, the world abounds with persons who speak aloud that God is one and all pervading and yet they grope in the dark because what they say has not come out of their experience of the Real; it is all a formal or bookish affair, a dry and meaningless parrot-like chanting That is why they become the prisoners of pride and are eventually devoured by Death, only to be reborn again and again. "O Nanak, the one Onkar (God) alone is; none else is"[3] "He who has Known the one knows all and becomes free".[4] "He alone is the Knower and the Doer."[5] It is, therefore, desirable that man should choose his way between the 'frog way'[6] leading to the ordeal of the endless round of births and deaths, and the 'Lotus way'[7] leading man onto the Light of Truth that makes him free and one with the Ek Onkar. Nanak expresses his sincerest and heartfelt feeling of gratitude to the Guru, who showed to him the inmost divine spirit, the Indwelling Light called God or 'Om' with-in his own heart.[8]

In short, Om is God in sound-form or Word-form, and to know Om is to be Om: and the easiest way to know Om is to meditate on it regularly with unmixed love and respect. To put it differently Om is the manifest form of the Unmanifest One. Nanak

1. Ibid., pp. 516-517, Ram Kali M. 1. Dakhani Onkar.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 517/3 Ram Kali M. 1. Dakh Khani Onkar.
3. Ibid., p. 517/5.
4. Ibid., p. 517/7.
5. Ibid., p. 517/8.
6. Ibid., p. 576. Rag Majh M. 1. Chaupadai.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 524. Ram Kali M. Dakhani Onkar.

says that only the fortunate ones have in their hearts the loving zest to know Om and be one with Him. Om is the beginning, Om is the destination; Om is from the first to the last; he who knows it is truly liberated.

Om there thus was, long before Nanak appeared on the spiritual stage of medieval India; even before the creation of the universe which is said to have only evolved out of it. In the spiritual literature of the pre-Nanak Hindus, there is a thorough description of the word. 'Aum' (ॐ) which is nothing other than Nanak's Onkar. It is variously described as Udgeetha[1] and Pranava (प्रणव),[2] "the Ekakhsharam", the imperishable, the ineffable and the eternal one. Maharshi Manu quotes and aquates Aum with Para Brahma when he says 'एकाक्षर परब्रह्म". The 'Aum' is regarded as one syllabled word and synonym of the One, almighty God. Since it is, was in the beginning, it is always used at the commencement of prayers and is prefixed with any mantra with a view to pack it with the supreme-most power of God this monosyllable embodies. The Katho-panishad a says about Aum thus:

"एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं परम् ।
एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत् ॥' 1.2.16

'Aum' alone is the imperishable word; this is the Supreme Reality Having known this imperishable One, one gets accomplished in fulfilling anything one desires. Take for example, milk, butter is there in the milk in invisible imperishable form One has to churn the milk to get at the butter. As butter is in milk, so Brahman is in human body. though he is not the body in the same way as the butter is not the milk. Only when one churns one's psycho-physical organism i.e., the body with the help of 'Aum' as the churning stick and with devotional and loving meditation on that syllable as water is used for faciliating the process of churning milk, one will certainly be able to discover Brahma in the milk of one's own body. It is the process of self knowing the self Aum is the knower, repetition of the mono syllable with love and devotion is the process, and the Aum is the knowledge. The perfect identity of 'Aum' as 'Atman', with aum as 'parmatma' is the real knowledge, the Truth of truths (सत्यस्य सत्यम्).

The syllable aum, which is the symbol of Brahma—it is symbol only till it is realised—stands for the manifested world, the

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1. The Thirteen Principal Upanishads Translated by Robert Ernest Hume, p. 177.
2. Patanjal Yogdarshanam, p. 29. Sutra 1/27-28.—by Sri Ram Sanker Bhatacharya.

past, the present, and the future, as well as the unmanifested Absolute.[1] Aum is thus the self, the deepest essence of the soul, the image of God. But it is not enough to know it only intellectually. One has to experience it by becoming one with it. And, it may be emphasized that without the knowledge of the Real, freedom from the rounds of births is an impossibility. As the greatest exponent of Advaita Vedenta, Sri Samkar tells us in his "Bhaja Govindam"

> "कुरुते गगा सागर गमंन व्रत परिपालनमथवादानम् ।
> ज्ञानविहीन: सर्वमतेन मुक्ति न भवति जन्मशतेन ॥"

liberation without realisation cannot be had through the repetition of pilgrimages, keeping of vows etc. even during hundred births. What is of utmost importance in spiritual life is the personal, direct and intuitive apprehension of the Reality.

That is why all the saints and seers all the world over and in all times have said the same in regard to salvation. And, Guru Nanak is no exception when he emphatically admonishes the people for their gross worldliness and exhorts them for their own great good in the spiritual necessity of self-realisation. Onkar, the word and sound-form of the formless One, is what should be the only object of man's meditation for experiencing the identity of the self with Guru and then with God, the Brahma of the Upnishads. Clearly and explicitly has Guru Nanak thus said: "Onkar is He who created Brahma; Yea, Brahma, who Treasured God in his mind. Onkar is He who created the mountains, the yugas; Onkar is He who created the Vedas. Onkar is He who, through the word, emancipated all; Onkar is He through whom the God-conscious beings are saved. Hearye, the meaning of the word "Om", which, indeed, is the essence of the three worlds (1). Pundit,[2] why writest thou of strife and involvement ? Pray, write thou only the God's Name, by the Guru's Grace (1-Paure).[3]

The realisation of God in both His unmanifest and mainfest form is the ripened and sweet fruit of Guru's Grace, about which we shall speak a little later.

Thus one may now sum up the first two words "EK Onkar" as representing the one single supreme Reality, God, in its two forms, the unmanifest one (ek) and the manifest 'onkar' the word form or the sound form of the formless one. "Belief in one Eternal

1. Mandukyopanishad. /1/ ॐ इत्येदक्षरमिदं·······तदप्योङ्कार एव ।
2. Sri G.G. Sahib, Translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, Ramkali M. 1. Dakhani —Onkar.
3. Shri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 11.

Reality" writes Prof. Jodh Singh call Him God, Allah or Ram, is one of the fundamental doctrines of Sikhism; and the ultimate goal of the life of a Sikh is to realise His existence and be in tune with Him.

Satnama

The reality connoted by Syl'able Om is one. If you want to know Him, call Him Satya (eternal-truth), says Guru Nanak. True, indeed, the Reality that expressed itself in the sound form —Om—is one nameless and formless, but the experiencers of that one heard it in 'om' sound and gave it the Name 'Truth'. In his ecstatic oneness with the Real, Ek, Guru Nanak had known and lived the Real which alone to Him is True. Rest all is false and unreal. So the recognition of Reality as Sat Nama. The nameless is named.

It is from this essence of reality that the concept of Name is derived, through Truth i.e., God beyond the range of human reason and perception. It is believed that by meditating on the Name with love, regard and gratitude, one can reach the limitless an inaccessible. For, in the Name resides that One of which the Name is i.e. God. And through loving and regardful remembeance of God, it is possible, says Nanak, to know Him and lead a unitive life with Him. This is the royal road to the realisation of the ultimate Reality. One has to make one's will subservient to His will by way of ceaselessly hearing the Name of God with Heart filled with love. That is exactly what Nanak Deva has said in Japji thus:

"How then shall we know the Truth?
How shall we rend the evils of untruth away?
Abide though by His will, and make thine own
His will, O Nanak, that is written in thy heart".

Categorically does Nanak state that this Truth can not be comprehended through the process of thought. No amount of mental thinking, how great the thinker, can be of any avail in opening any access to truth, far, as the Sruti says the Atman can neither be realised by the study of the vedas or scriptures, nor by hearing lot of sermons, nor by visiting any number of holy centres of pilgrimages; it can be realised only by the power of loving meditation on the name of God and by the Grace of God or Guru. And, as Guru Nanak says: "Sociai soch na hovai je soci lakh var" i. e., it is not through thought that He is to be comprehended though we strive to grasp Him a hundred thousand times. The pathway to God-realisation lies through loving subordination of one's will with His Will (Hukam Rajai calana Nanak Likhiya Nal).

In Japa ji '4' Nanak says that 'God is the Truth Absolute, True is His Name: and that O Nanak, this alone need we know that God, being Truth, is the one light of all' For, 'Truth is, according to Nanak, the highest spiritual reality, God; and love of Truth and Truthful life are the cardinal moral virtues of pure water which constitute the motive force of man's spiritual pursuits [1] Hence, if people act truthfully, they become able to know the pathway to salvation; without truthful living, the sea of illusion can not be crossed, says Nanak.[2] Rightly indeed Horace Mann said "keep one thing for ever in—view the truth, and if you do this though it may seem to lead you away from the opinions of men, it will assuredly conduct you to the throne of God."

The question may thus arise that if the way of Truth leads away from the way of the world, is it imperative that man should give up the world and entirely shut himself away from the men of the world? If the love of the Truth, as it seems, implies hatred of falsehood i.e. the world, should man bid good-bye to the world for ever ? No, not that says Nanak. "The True way is to be in the world and simultaneously be out of it," the Great Guru said to Mardana" [3] This is the lotus way as against the frog way, according to Nanak. The lotus way is the true way in as much as man gradually perfects himself in the spiritual art of living in the world without being worldly in the same way as the lotus does not get contaminated though growing out of mud and living in it. The true way thus lies in living in the world, battling day by day, against the forces of the Dark and the Unreal so that the seeker might one day be able to discover the strength of the Light and the Real within and, thereby, also be able to dispel darkness and destroy the forces of the unreal. The forces of illusion will have to be overcome by the forces of light, which is both the eye and the life of Reason. As eye can not see its own sight, so Reason can not see its own eye, the Light. Rightly has Maharshi Sri Aurobindo said about the reason thus: "Reason is the instrument, reason is the bar." Reason has no power to reach the reality, but once reality is realised through faith (Sraddha), reason is very useful to relay it for communication and satisfaction. One can only by ceaseless devotion and loveful meditation on the Name Divine find the Truth; and by God's Grace, be free or attain emancipation for ever. Truth is thus the goal of all life and truthful living is the means to realise the goal.

1. Sikh Review—June 1972.
"Love of Truth and Truthful living"—by Guru Ikbal Singh, p. 16.
2. Nanak Vani. Ram Kali Var, p. 569.
3. Bada Nanak—B.P.L. Bedi, p. 62.

Where there is no realisation of Truth, there is the ghastly shadow of death and destruction. Wherever there is Truth and its realisation, there is the light and bliss eternal. It is upto man to choose the way and progressively march upon it and realise the ultimate (Brahman) gradually. But Nanak Deva asks man to pray and to meditate in order to reach the goal in this very life.

Karta Purukha

So the Reality which is one, manifests itself in the sound creative, Om, and is named Truth. 'Om' is thus the manifestation of the Real in sound form; 'Sat' is corollarily the recognition of the Real in name form One, is the act of God, the Real; the other is the act of the experiencer of Guru Nanak in the instance on point-after the actual experience This act of naming the Real as 'Satnam' is an act of recognizing the Truth of an immanent and transcendantal Being who though invisible to the physical eye and incomprehensible by the senses, is at the back of all that we see. The visible world does not stay same for ever; its stay is transitory. What makes it appear for a while and then disappear without notice? The seers have discovered, on the basis of direct first hand-intuitive experience, that the Eternal One which is, was, and will ever be behind every thing that is visible, changeable, fleeting alone is Real because it is all abiding, changeless, and absolute; eternal, ineffable and infinite; omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. The ever changing panorama in the wide, wide expanse of Nature is thus not all that is to be known. For, its knowledge is as ephemeral as is this phenomenal universe. The knowledge of That One (Tad Ekam) of the Rg. Vedic hymns' or of the Ek Onkar of Guru Nanak's mystical rubric-both of which are one and the same- is the knowledge of the Real, the permanent, the eternal. As such the knowledge of the Real alone is real. The saints and seers of this knowledge which is called Truth of Truths (सत्यस्य सत्यम्) have, like Guru Nanak, all stated with unique unanimity of experience that the fleeting scenes of the phenomenal world are nothing but a drama enacted by Eternal through the Primordial Nature i. e. (Mool Maya). Whatever happens is the offshoot of His will. The entire phenomenal universe is His sport. Whatever is, is because of Him; whatever was and is not, is because of his wish The entire creation originated in Him out of His Will. whatever is not and will be is because of his wish; creation is sustained in Him in all its fleeting colours and contours; the creation is dissolved in Him only as per His wish. He alone is.

Unfortunately and strangely enough man misreads the phenomenal world as the Real one and arrogates to himself the

Power of knowing and marshalling the forces of Nature for changing the face of the earth and for promoting the welfare of the human world He has taken upon himself the credit of doing all that is good colourful and valuable in the world. He has assumed the role of the conquistador, of the crusader against the barriers of Nature. He has identified himself as the knower of the universe and the doer of things worthy of his majestic genius. In this identification of his being the knower and doer of things, man has become a victim of his own Reason in the sense that he refuses to recognize that there is an invisible kingdom of Reality which is inaccessible to Reason. The limitations of Reason to reach the illimitable are so marked and yet man will regardnothing tenable which Reason can not test and verify. Guru Nanak says that in this act of man's recognition of the sovereignty of Reason, against the sovereignty of Spirit, which is eternal is to be traced in the germplasm of his ego i e., the haume. As an oak sleeps in an acorn, so sleeps the gaint ego in man's recognition of the supremacy of Reason, and thus in his misreading of the phenomenal universe, as the only ultimate Reality, he asserts his ignorance and arrogance only.

As a result of this basic error, man began to regard himself as the prime knower and doer of all things, as the chief active agent of good and bad in life. as the shaper of events human as well as natural and as director of destiny-personal and social, national, as well as international. In this assumed authorship by man of all that was. all that is. and all that shall be is the seed-bed of man's ego; and as the assumption of this role gets deeper roots in Reason, there is the natural result of the extension of the empire of Ego with Reason as its premier. All reason is yoked to glorify human ingenuity and skill to the utter disregard of the Highest and the Holy 'Paramesvara'. And herein lies the root of the cardinal error of man, which has sprouted and spread as a mighty tree full of innumerable fruits of births and deaths. The error is born of ignorance, says Nanak.

It is when we delude ourselves with the thinking that it is we who act. who earn merit, perform great vows, make pilgrimages, give charities serve the nation, explore Nature, reach the Mars or the Moon —then it is that we, by thus enslaving ourselves to petty egoism, invite ruin upon our ideals. True victory can come only when we realize that it is God who acts through us; when we regard ourselves as tools, passive to the workings of His Will; only when we understand God as the only Reality working out His will through the countless creatures; only when we realise that human beings

are nothing but instruments of His will and, as such, it is erroneous to regard ourselves as the great actors in the Drama of life and the world; only when we mend and mingle our will with His supreme will, we can in reality, enjoy life and attain Freedom from the thraldom of human sufferings.

God is all. He is the Creator, Sustainer, Destroyer of all that is. He is the Scribe as well as the Script. He is the play wright as well as the director and all of us are the actors on the stage of world. He is the Drama. Only He is. Till this realisation grows and becomes an inalienable part of man's experience, he will go on taking pride in the supremacy of his reason. Till he remains a prisoner of his pride or haume' he will go on being pounded by the pains and pleasures of life, and tied deep down, as per the law of Karma, to the law of Karma to the ceaseless cycle of births and deaths. Nanak says "Thyself the tablet, Thyself the pen Thou (art) also the writing upon it (N-Malar Ki-Var 28 Sl 2). Thyself the fish theyself the net (N Maru Solhe 1:11) ..Thyself the the ocean, drvland, water and tank- Thyself the yogi and Thyself enjoyer (Bhogi) (N Maru Solhi 1:6, 11, 12). Speak of the one, O Nanak, why of a second (N. Ma'ar Ki-Var, 28, Sl. 2)? He is himself the maker of His own p'ay . . of whose play there is no limit (Ar. Sukhmani 13:8, 16·3). "Thou are the Doer, I do nothing. When I act it comes to nothing, but when thou Thyself actest, that comes to pass" (Rag Asa Chhant, 7:3) [1]

It thus transpires that Guru Nanak has, by using the epithet 'Karta Purusha', spoken of the first attribute of God. Having experienced the sound creative and God as the only Reality called Truth, Nanak has begun describing the Reality as the only Doer of all that exists. The use of the word Purukha' with Karta i e Doer is highly significant. The term 'purasha' is said to mean that reality which is dorment in every pore of the Universe 'pure pure shete sa purushah' i.e., He is 'Pursha' who sleeps in every particle'. This expression is an extension of the unmanifest 'Ik' who is invisibly the maker of the universe and the doer of everything that seems done by man himself. The Real alone is the Doer, but man commemorates his own intelligence for excellence in works done or for the beneficial effects of the events in which he thinks he contributed most As a matter of fact, the Real is in Man in the same manner in which He is the inmost dwelling spirit of all that is, animate and inanimate; and that Real alone is the prime actor. If man can understand this he will have reason to subscribe to the view of Nanak that God alone is the

1. The Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib by Duncan Greenless, p 48.

Doer and He acts through them whom He chooses. Imperceptibly thus He alone is the Essence and the doer (Karta) of every thing in the vast flux of cosmos which we designate by the term 'existence'.

Only through God's Grace man can grow into the wisdom of this realisation.[1] Only then the doctrine of name can be said to develop into the doctrine of surrender to God's Will in actual life. Only then man can be emptied of his ego and his false view of the world and life around him. Only then man attains the wisdom of the fulness of the omnipresence and omnipotence of God. Only then man loves to uphold, with Guru Nanak, that Ek Onkar 'Satnam' is the 'Karta Purukha'.

Nirbhau

Having experienced the Reality as the latent as well as the potent force of the entire existence and of all that happens, Guru Nanak climbs the still higher heights of spiritual life wherefrom He realised the Becominglessness (Nirbhau) of the Primordial Being. It is unfortunate that almost all the great writers on the philosophy of Guru Nanak have not endeavoured to enter the inner core of the meaning of the world 'nirbhau' used by Nanak to further delineate the person of the impersonal one. Only superficially they seem to have contented themselves by rendering it into english by term "without fear". The classical Sanskrit word 'Nirbhau' (निर्भउ) has been mistaken for the other word "nirbhaya', which means 'shorn of fear' or fearess.

A deeper probe would suggest that the description of the Reality as "without fear" loses all meaning and propriety when it is borne in mind that the eternal one is the alpha and omegha of all Existence, the be all and end all of all that is. It is pointless to say that the All Pervading spirit is "without fear". The 'Karta' Purusa' may generate fear or love, as He chooses, in the hearts of the people, but to describe Him as subject to no fear is to state only a negative side of his psychic phenomenon. It is, however, different to recognise 'becominglessness' (निर्भउ), of this supreme Being. Becoming is native to all who are born, for birth itself is a fact of 'Bhav' (भव), only when the sea of 'becoming' has been crossed by the loving and regardful meditation on the Name of God, realisation of this superme truth can grow. How can God have any 'bhav' i.e. becoming for He is Pure Being, Perfect and Eternal. Only the impure becomes pure, imperfect becomes perfect, ephemeral become eternal. 'Becoming' is the trait of the flesh, which the Eternal One is

1. Nanak Vani, p. 79.- Dr. Jai Ram Mishra.

not. In his highest spiritual ascent into Truth, Consciousness Bliss, Guru Nanak must have experienced the unitive life of Light and Love in its perfection. And when he descended from that height to impart to the people His knowledge, he must have transcribed his initial state of Blissful Being into plain negative of the 'becoming' to which all the bodied ones are subjected.

In the perspective of this ecstatic ascent of Nanak Deva into the supramental state of the Almighty Being, it might perhaps be B.P.L. Bedi has translated the word 'nirbhau' as "without beginning and ending" which are the twin aspects of the "Becoming". The Reality-God is beginningless and endles though it is the beginning and end of all. All evolve out of Him, live in Him and ultimately dissolve in Him But He is both beginningless and endless i.e , without any 'becoming'. The word 'Nirbhau' should thus be understood and interpreted as the attribute of Karta Purkha who is nirbhau, that is, the One with the Beginningless Beginning and Endless Ending.[1]

In support of this interpretation Bedi gives a very cogent esoteric argument. He regards 'fear' as one of the attributes of darkness[2], and states that "when seen with the eye of the occult perception," the colour of fear is "coal black and thus the embodiment of deepest darkness". And then he asks: "what is the definition of darkness?" and himself answers, "only one. Absence of Light".

Now, the entire inner meaning stands as if self revealed. It is light, Bedi argues, that dispells darkness and that, as common sense prescribes, darkness can not penetrate into light. Ek Onkar", the Total light, is thus the total negation of Darkness, of which fear is one of the attributes To describe Him as "without fear" is to fall short of the meaning "without becoming" which Nanak haply whised to impart to the word 'nirbhau'.

In short, the essence of all existence, the Being, is 'without becoming'. The term 'nirbahu' thus implies what may be called the doctrine of becominglessness of the Being. God is birthless and deathless.

Nirvair

As nirbhau represents the becominglessness of the Eternal one, so does 'nirvair' express His unrivalledness. As becoming is native to all living organism, so is the nature of every born one to be possessed by mutual rivalry. In plain, there is nobody in the

1. Bada Nanak, B.L.P. Bedi, p. 41.
2. Ibid.

phenomenal world who does not have opposite i.e., rival; there is nothing in the lap of this vast existence the opposite pair of which is not there. 'Esoterically we know', to quote Bedi again, "that every thing in Creation has opposite and the "pair of opposites" is not only the law of logic, but as well the foundational force in the magnetic field of Creation, and every object that has been created".[1] Therefore, being "without an opposite" and being independent of the law of the pair of opposites" in an attribute which belongs only to Him, the Eternal one and the only one, without a second or opposite.

Almost all the scholars of repute have explained this attribute of "nirvair" as meaning 'without hate' but B. P. L. Bedi, in his book "Sat Guru Bada Nanak for the Millons", has controverted it and has upheld that even on esoteric ground the idea of 'hate' is quite alien to idea of God, and that God, being illun ination perfect, does not permit of any of the factors of Darkness such as hate, fear etc., in His realm. Examined in context of this logic the attribute 'nirvair' is a corollary form the attribute nirbhau'.[2] To talk of the self-effulgent Almighty as 'without hate' and 'without enmity' is thus to talk of Him only in terms of human relations and not in terms of spiritual experience

Nanak's conception of 'Ek Onkar' is the highest kind of monistic conception. He is, without a second.

When only God is, His being 'nirvair' signifies His being unique and unchallenged Omnipotent as He is, He does not have any rival. From this monistic point of view, the word 'nirvair' should mean not without enmity but without rival i e., unrivalled, one without the second.

Akala Murata

This Reality, which Nanak regards as one without a Second, is Eternal. It is beyond Time and Space. It is Deathless, ever living, ever present Absolute. It is the essence and epitom of timelessness. The recognition of the Reality as "Akalamurata" has given rise to the idea of His being beyond time though Time itself pays homage to His Lordship. Nanak's experience is at the back of this description of Reality.

The Sikh Gurus, therefore, regard the Eternal 'Akal Pursha' as the only Reality. This eternity is the other aspect of 'infinity', which is summed in the attribute 'nirbhau'. What is infinity but an infinite or endless expansion of the self on one point. Various

1. Bada Nanak- B. P. L, Bedi, p. 43.
2. Bada Nanak-B. P. L. Bedi, p. 41.

forms and names are assumed by the Self which can neither be counted nor imagined. He is one and He is many. In eternity He is one, infinity, He is many. He fills the earth, the heavens and the neither regions and all the universes and sustains them. The Supreme Being is in every blade of grass in the forest. He is in the wind, in waters, in fires. He pervades the four quarters and ten directions. No place is without His presence. He always is, everywhere is; He is all powerful and all-knowing; He is the doer: the creator, the preserver, the destroyer. He is in Brahma, in Visnu, in Mahesa He is what one no else is or can ever be, nor even was or shall be. He is immense, immeasurable, ineffable. Time can not bind Him. Space can not occupy Him. He binds the time and He occupies the space.

He is Akala Purusha, the imperceptibly Imperishable Being, the Atman of the upnishads and of the Bhagwadgita. Lord Krishna speaks of Akal Purusha or Atman thus:

> नैन छिन्दति शस्त्राणि, नैन दहति पावक : ।
> न चैन क्लेद्यान्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुत : ।।
> अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च : ।
> नित्य : सर्वगत : स्थाणुरचलोऽय सनातन : ।।

B.G. II 23 and 24

"Weapons can not cut this (Atman); fire can not burn this, water can not wet this; nor can wind make this dry". "He is incapable of being cut or burnt or made wet or dry. He is eternal, all pervading, steadfast, immovable and without any beginning."

These verses of the Gita cleary portray the imperishable nature of the Atman, the Reality as described by Guru Nanak as 'Ek Onkar'. It is because of this characterstic attribute of deathlessness that God is styled as 'Akal Purusha; (the imperceptible, imperishable) and Akal Moorti (the essence and epitom of Timelessness or Deathlessness).

From it is derived, on testimony of Nanak's experience of the Reality, the doctrine of the immortality of soul. From it is derived the doctrine of ambrosial Juice which the aspirant drinks when he is in harmony with the Real on account of loving meditation on the Divine Name.

Ajuni

God, being Eternal Being, is perfect, absolute and independent. He has neither death nor birth. He is both deathless and birthless. Unborn i.e., Ajooni and undying are His attributes as

which one should know; because to be with Him or to meditate on His Name with love, gratitude and regard is to be as free from birth and death as He Himself is. Only when one has realised God, one gets liberated for ever from the rounds of births and deaths.

All things and beings take birth in Him, but He is never born. He is Ajooni in this sense. All things and beings die in Him, but He never dies. He is Ajooni in this sense too. For does not the Bhagwadgita say that who ever dies must be born again?[1] Thus deathlessness and birthlessness are the twin aspects of the single attribute 'Ajooni' i e. without womb.

"O Ye stupid, He neither takes birth nor dies,
Burn be the lips that utter God takes birth;
He comes not into flesh and dies not,
Neither He comes nor departs from this earth,
He, God of Nanak, is All absorbing and ever present".[2]

Nanak's God is thus both abinashi (indestrucuble) and anadi (without beginning).

On this basis, strong and unassailable, Guru Nanak, rejected the theory of re-incarnation or avatarvada, and we shall discuss it latter at its proper place. For, to be incarnated means to be involved in death (binashi).

Sheh Bhanga

And, finally, since God is neither born nor does He die, who makes Him known to us? If he is unborn, then how has He made himself known to His seekers? To this there are two answers: He manifests Himself; and makes the seeker know Him, have a vision or realisation of Him. He makes Himself known only through the Grace of the Guru, as explained under the next sub-heading 'Guru Prasada'.

God is Sui Generis or Swayambhu (स्वयंभू). Absolute as all powerful as He is, the Ek Onkar could be created by none, except by Himself. And thus attribute 'Seh Bhang stands as the crowning testament to His Glory and Greatness, or as B.P.L. Bedi puts it "the word 'Seh Bhang' puts the capstone on the edifice of the attributes of the Almighty". God is self-generating, self-manifesting,[3] self-willing, self-revealing."

Guru Prasadi

All this describes God, the Indescribable, in His fullness. God is infinite and so ultimately beyond apprehension, but this does not mean that He is wholly unknowable. He is knowable, may be in

1. Bhagwadgita. II. 27.
2. Message of Sikhism. Rag Bhairo, M. 5—by Harbans Singh.
3. BaBa Guru Nanak—by B.P.L. Bedi, p. 42.

glimpses, when He reveals Himself to His devotees who knock at His door by means of 'Hari-Sumiran', remembering Him with single-minded love, regard and devotion. He reveals Himself when the Guru is pleased with the disciples or seekers of Truth.

"Within all there is light, and
It is thy Light which is in all.
Through the Guru's leading
The Light is revealed".[1]

Further,

"Sayeth Nanak, the Soul is subject to
the law of Karma. It cannot get emancipation
without meeting the Guru. Only the disciple
who sells his mind to the Guru,
succeeds in his attempt."

This imperative need of obeying the Sat Guru for the realisation of the Supreme brings us to the understanding of the doctrine of Grace. None can realise without the guidance of the Guru. Only with the help of the Guru can light shine into the heart's dark places. It is the good man who meets this heavenly guide, and it is by serving him that His grace is won and the road to God is thrown open.

The question then is who is Guru ? He who has Seen God can share Him with another, can introduce Him to a friend and so fill that friend with universal joy. A God-realised soul is the Guru. And the Gurus are the light bearers to mankind, the messengers of the timeless, bestowers of Divine wisdom upon those who deservedly seek Him with love, gratitude, regard and devotion In words of Prof. Jod Singh "Here the Sikh Gurus have propounded another doctrine. It is not the body of Guru that is the Guru. It is the 'Word' that is the Guru." Nanak says: "The word is the Guru' The Guru is the word; the word contains all the nectars. If a disciple obeys what the word says, evidently Guru will make him cross the ocean."

Thus God can be realised only by the Grace of the Guru who imparts the Word which is the abode and essence of God. The Word is to be meditated upon with intense love, regularly and steadfastly.

To sum up: There is one God without a second. Eternal Truth is His name. He is the imperceptible Author of all things. He is unchanging, Immortal and Infinite; He can be known only through the Grace of the Guru.

1. Dhansari Aarati, A.G., pp. 13.663.
Guru Nanak and the Sikh—WH McLeod, p. 174.

2

The Motive Forces For Mystical Life

God-realisation the Highest Good

Nanak's Philosophy is the philosophy of God realisation, for the highest and the noblest purpose[1] of human life is the realisation of 'that one' whose creative Sound sustains the cosmos and whose divine Light smoulders in every human heart. To reckon that light[2] within and grow into inalienable oneness with It, is the summum bonum of all human existence. Comprehension of and unison with the Real, the Almighty One, who in Nanak's idiom, is called Satnam[3], constitute the twin chord of Nanak's philosophy of God realisation. Failure to grasp this is fatal.

The world in which man lives is the world of perceptible actuality, and the essence of the world is its impermanence. Nanak calls it Maya. One who does not comprehend the nature of this visible actuality which emanates from the ultimate Reality consigns one-self to the process of transmigration. The supreme purpose of man's life is to accomplish annulment of transmigration which is the 'Sahaj Swabhav' i.e., the natural trait of Indwelling Spirit. And the pathway to this realisation is the pathway of loveful and sincere surrender at the feet of the Eternal one, of incessant and devotional rememberance (Sumiran) of Hari, the Lord, which follows upon the Guru's grace.

For Guru Nanak the meaning and purpose of human existence centres in the divine existence of EK, the one, He who creates, sustains and destroys, He who having created reveals Himself in His creation, He who by His Grace communicates to man the way of salvation and calls forth the response which enables him to appropriate that salvation. Set under the spell of 'Haume' i.e. the ego against this sovereign Master is the man who, in his unregenerate condition, manifests a corrupt nature cutting him off from the divinely proferred oneness with Him. Such men, who do not respond to the call Divine and go their own chosen path of anger, lust and passions are, to Guru Nanak, pervert and deluded and are the subjects, filled with 'dubidha' (duality), of transmigration.

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 801, Sloka Shaskrati. M.l.
2. Ibid., p. 416, Dhansari Araati. M.1.
3. Ibid., p. 79, Japji 1.

Nanak calls such ones 'Manmukhi'. But those who lovingly listen and respond to the voice of Light within, devotionally live in this world, act in His name, and sincerely attribute all acts to the command Divine i.e., 'Hukum', with an utter sense of resignation to His will are what Nanak calls 'Gurumukhi'. Such humans alone are the followers of the True-way, the pathway of God realisation.

The True Way

'The True way', said the Sadguru, 'is to be in the world and yet be out of it.' To talk about this ideal way is as easy as it is difficult to walk along it. This way is open only to the brave ones as Pritam[1] points out; this way is not open to the spiritually[2] timid who fall easy pray to the passions of life. Bravery and timidity need to be understood only in context of man's conquest over his ego and ego's conquest over man respectively.

He is the bravest of the brave who has overcome his inner ego. Only the brave person says Nanak dies a worthy death, for he is accepted by the Lord after his death.[3] The entire mankind is thus divisible in two classes of men only, those human folks who belong to God and those who belong to Maya. The former ones are brave and the latter ones timid Thus understood there are in this world of human beings either 'Haridas', the servants of God, or 'Mayadasas', the servers of the Mammon. The former ones are the conscientious travellers on the path of God-realisation while the latter are the willing but non-knowing prisoners of passions in life. It is upto Man himself to choose between the service of God for self realisation and the service of the Mammon through self nescience. In each case the incentives are there. Those who realise the transitory nature of the things of the world and make-up their mind to stick to the spirit Eternal come under the category of God's men. But those who are lured by the temptations of the worldly life, by the pleasures of the flesh and fleeting joys of the temporal world fall under the category of Mammon's men. The nature of incentives for both the categories of man is not only different but opposite of each other. It is the object of this chapter to describe, following Nanak, spiritual incentives which inspire man to undertake the pilgrimage to self-realisation.

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1. "O marag chhe Surano" St, Pritam: Message of Sikhism, p. 126-Harbans Singh.
2. Message of Sikhism, p. 143-Vadhans Rag M. 1.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 337-Jairam Misra, Rag Vad Hans. M. 1.

Transitoriness of the world and the Permance of the Eternal One

There are many who say that suffering and frustration inspire man to seek divine shelter. The intensity of pain and misery suffered by man throws him in the protective embrace of the Almighty. Conversely, he who has not suffered at all in life has nothing to do with spirituality. Suffering is a divine ladder for man to climb up, step by step, to the peak of spiritual life. All this may be true. This has, however, to be borne in mind that millions of human beings suffer intensely and pass away from the world without an iota of self-realisation. The awareness of the impermanance of the pleasures and pains of flesh, transitoriness of the things of the world, and of the fact that the belongings however precious and dear to man, forsake man at time of his death is one of the vital incentives to spiritual life. Understanding of the unabiding nature of the goods of life lies at the core of spiritual incentives. Mere suffering does not seem to be enough The comprehension that suffering and smiles alternate in life as do richness and poverty. that attachment to things ephemeral bind man to the succession of woes and weal in life constitutes the essential substance of the incentives to spiritual life.

The visible is perishable

In the fire of agony born of unbearable adversities that make a hell of life, the heart of man tends to become pure; and in the process of burning of dross and dirt that lie hidden in human heart, if a man can understand the unreal nature of the lures of earthly life, this subtle act of divining serves as a very powerful incentive to spiritual life. And the diviner begins to subscribe to the intuitive understanding of what Guru Nanak says that "what ever is visible is perishable".[1] Nothing that comes to the eyes lives for ever. It is, therefore, futile for man to cling to the things and beings of the world for the plain reason that those things are subject to decay. Why, then, bemoan for the goods that degenerate and human beings that die ? Why not, stick to the Eternal one, the pearly effulgence, that shines in the heart of every creature? Says Guru Nanak. "O Brother, neither richness nor thy body goes with thee:

> The Lord's name is the real wealth, And
> it is gifted away to thee by the Guru"[2]

1. Nanak Vani, p 523, Rag Ram Kali M.I. DhaKhani Onkar.
2. Ibid., p. 156, Sri Rag M.I. Astpadi.

In other words, the world is transitory in nature and God alone is all abiding or ever living Reality. So, they alone are happy who crave for the Real; the rest who, in mad frenzy, run helter-skelter and go crazy for transitory things of mundane existence, are ever struck by misery. The perceptible world is a deception[1] because man is so much bewitched by it that even when he knows that every thing in the world is short-lived, he strives hard to achieve them and gets frustrated in event of his failure to achieve them or in case of his losing them having once gained them. Briefly, it is the attachment of man to the things of the world that goes to account for his sense of joy or sorrow-joy when he gets them or sorrow when he loses them. Thus Guru Nanak points out that "false is the descretion to attach importance to the world."[2] This attachment grows and deepens ever more till man keeps his back to God and firmly denies his love of God. Till he turns his face towards God through the Guru's grace, he will go on regarding the world as real and thus fall into the deceitful cycle of births and deaths. Nanak says: "We have made (this world) our home; but each day the anxiety to pass away increases. Yea, it would be a true home only if it stayed. What kind of station is this world ? Do thou then by the Deeds of faith, gather thou the expense (for travel beyond), and call upon the Name. The Yogi sits in postures; the Mullah hath his own seat; the Pundit recites the Books; the Siddha sits in the temple of Gods. But the Gods and the Siddhas, the worshippers of Shiva, the heavenly musicians, the men of silence, the Sheikhs, Pirs and men in command, have all left; the others too are all awaiting their turn; the Kings, the chiefs, the rich and the mighty, no one remains. A brief movement or two, and then we pass away: O my mind, know thou, that thou must also leave The word reveals this but rare is the one who knows. That the lord pervadeth the earth, the waters and the interspace; so Nanak prays: He is the Allah, unknowable, unfathomable, the creator, the cause, the beneficent. All the world cometh and goeth and only the Lord of mercy stays. Home is that over whose head is not the writ of death. The skies and the earth will pass away; yea, the One alone will remain.[3]

The awarness of the impermanence of the world,[4] and of the permanence of the only One[5] is the epitome of spiritual life It follows, therefore, that the only objective of human life is God-realisation[6]

1. Nanak Vani, p. 159, Sri Rag M. 1. Astapadi.
2. Ibid., p. 659 Rag Maru Sohala M. 1. 7th.
3. Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, p. 60.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Nanak Vani, p. 148. Sri Rag M.1. Astpadi.

and the golden way to it is the loveful remembrance of Hari and repetition of His Name which comes through Guru's grace. And if one fails to fulfil the purpose of life, one has simply bartered away, as if, the most precious pearls for worthless bit of glasses only.[1] Truly, it is a failure to be sincerely regretted.

2. Dubidha and the Sleep of Ignorance: Attachment to the World

This brings one nearer to that attitude of mind which regards the 'Samsar' as the source of joy and happiness in life and delibera tely relegates God to the position of nothingness. Nanak dubs this mental attitude as 'dubidha'. Of this 'dubidha' is blindness born. Blindness is forgetfulness of God and attachment to the worldliness in life. They alone are blind who do not see that God realisation is the summum bonum of life. The third Sikh Guru Amardasa, following the footsteps of Nanak Dev, does rightly says: "Why call a man blind who has lost sight as ordained by God ? Rather call that man blind who does not obey Him "[2]

This is the conception of blindness as pointed out, like all saints, by Guru Nanak. Blind are they who go astray from the Master, the Almighty God. In a famous shloka, Nanak says: "He, who put life in thy body and built thee into a beauty. and gave thee eyes to see, the tongue to speak and ears to fix in mind what thou hearest, and gave thee feet to walk and hands to do and blest thee with food and raiment, Him thou knowest not, O Blind one, and doeth dark deed ?"[3]

Let us analyse the verse. It says in the first place that God has created life (jiva) and adorned it with a beautious form. It is with His power and grace that the 'jiva' performs all actions, but how unfortunate it is that he is ignorant of His creater and adorner. This nescience of Him is his blindness. Secondly, it emphatically lays down that without the grace of Guru he cannot swim across the sea of becoming (birth after birth, and death after death).

In the third place, it bears out the instruction that "O Nanak ! meditate on the word of the Sadguru so that neither the Ego, nor the attachment,[4] nor the pride[5] would remain. "All the austerities, the studies of the Vedas and penance are useless till the arrogance and attachment are destroyed by patiently and lovingly

1. Nanak Vani, p. 180. Rag Majh M.I. Paudi.
2. Message of Sikhism, Rag Ram Kali M. 3.
3. Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, p. 129.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

meditating on the Word. Fourthly, he who has not cleansed his heart of the inner dirt, is blinded by the self assumed arrogance that he is supereme and the satisfaction of his sensory desires is the epitome of his existence. Man's ego is the root of the fatal mistake which binds him to the inexorable law of transmigration. Speaking of this blindness else[1] Nanak says somewhere that turning back upon God and rivetting attention on the world is the cardinal character of worldly human intellect. Any discretion born of such an earth-bound intellect is a sheer dissipation of energy, a stark pollution of the water of wisdom welling up in the recesses of mind, and unpardonable wasting of an opportunity of self-realisation which man has had in the form of human birth. Any action accompanying such a discretion is a logical culmination of the human psychology of myness and hisness, of the heightened sense of possession which creates walls of acquisitiveness between man and man, community and community, nation and nation. And the world of manifest diversity and disunity appears dear and real to human intellect which conveniently sets aside the counsel about the unmanifest unitive principle, the indwelling spirit, Sri Ram.[2] So, to close one's eyes to that one[3] is one's blindness. That's why salutations are gratefully offered at the feet of Guru who, by his grace, opens man's eye[4] on the divinity immanent and already inside him Without grace of God who Himself is the Guru it is impossible for man to attain to selfhood or God-realisation, and without this realisation life is a waste.[5]

Man Likened to 'Banjara'

That is why Guru Nanak exhorts man to turn his face towards God without further loss of time, for even a breath gone without His name is an accountable waste. He addresses man thus: "In the first watch of night, thou art cast into the womb, O my merchant friend, on thy head (Thou standest) and does penance and prayest to thy lord-yea, prayest thou to thy lord, thy mind fixed on Him, and then naked art thou delivered (into the world) and naked again dost thou passout of it. As is writ on thy forehead, so is the working of thy soul. Sayeth Nanak: life in the first watch, is cast into the womb of His will."[6]

By implication, Nanak addresses man as 'Banjara' whose

1. Nanak Vani, p 734, Rag Sarang Ki Var. M I.
2. Ibid , p 722, Rag Sarang M.1. Chaupada.
3. Ibid., p. 716, Rag Basant M.1.
4. Guru Gita Shri (3)
5. Nanak Vani, p. 717 Rag Pasant M I
6. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Translated by Dr Gopal Singh, p 68.

night halts are always in alien places and who keeps ever walking up during the night in order to watch his to-be-sold goods (Sauda). The night has four stages, so has life; conception, infancy, youth and old age when the messengers of death (Yama) visit man and nip the harvest of his life without mercy.

The gist of this entire poetic admonition, besides describing the whole span of human life as the four periods of Night, is summed up in the fourth and fifth times of verse 2 wherein Nanak says: "Beware, O unalert and stupid mind of mine, nothing is yours in the end and you do not know Him who is the architect of all this creation: The knowledge of that One alone is the goal".

The awareness of the approaching Death when all the relations cannot but forsake man, when man cannot but leave all his belongings right here in the world does cause in human mind a sort of apathy for worldliness and eventually serves as an incentives to man's mystical life.

It is wonderful that Nanak has pointed out in the last stanza of the above noted '**Pahare**' exactly what is told, though of course in different words, in the Bhagwadgita by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the thirteenth discourse entitled "The field and the knower of the field". Human body is the field which man cultivates. He furrows and ploughs the field, sows the seed of worldliness and reaps the harvest accordingly. But the one who is the indwelling Being in him is the knower of the field. It is, therefore, incumbent upon man to know the knower and be one with him by sowing in that ripartite soil of his body, mind, and soul the seed of the divinity that resides in him. That is the way of man's complete release from the tentacles of the 'Yoni' to which man, given to pursuit of senses, is inevitably subjected. The failure of man to sow and reap the crop of salvation or spiritual life is necessarily visited by Death[1] (Yama) who tears him away from one yoni after another until man attains, through God's grace and devotion, self-realisation. Thus when man is permanently lodged in the self, the ultimate truth, he is freed from the tyranny of the cycle of existence. Rightly does Kabir, the saint poet of Hindi literature, says that the whole world is blind and man is making a futile search of the Real in the world. In his famous meditational song,[2] Kabir stresses his conception of blindness, namely, self control-self abnegation, transcendence of intellect, search of the path way, and the grace of God to crown all

1. Nanak Vani, p. 166-67, Sri Rag M.I. Pahrai.
2. "Kahi Samujavo sab jag andha" —Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p. 6, R.D. Ranade.

effort." in fact, "says Prof. R.D. Ranade". Kabir's poem might be taken to be almost an epitome of spiritual life.[1] The world is aflame with fire of lust, passion and greed and the worldliness with which man is possessed can beget for him only the sweet-bitter fruit of worldliness. Only through the shelter of the inner Divinity, man can realise the inner self which permeates the entire creation. And, therefore, Guru Nanak urges man to listen to the voice of God speaking from within each human heart and meditate on it. "Only through hearing (the word of God) can a 'blind' find his pathway (to him); only through hearing, can be fathomed the unfathomable (He), says Guru Nanak meditational song in the "suniye dukh pap ka Nas".[2] It serves as an incentive to an aspirant for getting out of the blindness of worldliness and walking into the light of the Real.

Freedom From Sleep

The incentive which Nanak has furthered in his poem "Jaghu Jugdhu Sutiho chalya Banjara",[3] is the incentive of spiritual freedom from sleep. As a matter of fact, we are all sleeping till we are in reality awakened to the sense of divinity, God is omnipresent, but 'for whom is He so'? is the question. The immanence of God is not a theory to be cherished, it is a living experience of only those who are blessed with His vision. And the experience of the Real depends upon His will, though the aspirant has to incessantly dwell in His Name with love and devotion.

Plainly enough, all those who cling to the fleeting world are asleep and those who clenve to God alone are awake. Nanak warns the sleepers of their being slain or eaten up every moment by Death and asks them to shake off the fetters of sleep by constantly meditating on the Name divine. With deep longing a devotee thus cures himself and regards his pre-longing state of Godlessness as that of ignorance and sleep. Nanak laments that how can he be dear to his beloved (i.e. God) who is ever awake and waking while he is himself asleep in the ignorance of God[4] With out His pleasure or mercy people roll asleep in the bed of ignorance and suffer spans of coming into and going out of the world, for all who are in the slumber of Worldliness come (to live) and go (to die).[5]

Sleep means indulgence

To be precise, indulgence in life mundane is sleep and immersion in life meditational is wakefulness. Sleep is bondags. Wakeful-

1. "Kahi Samujaro Sab jag anada"—Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, P 6.{R.D Ranade.
2. Nanak Vani-Japjee, p. 87.
3. Ibid., p. 295-Rag Asha Kafi M.I. Astpadi.
4. Ibid., p. 267. Rag Asha M.I. Chaupada.
5. Ibid., p. 504. Rag Ramkali M.I. Astpadi.

ness is freedom from bondage. Nanak, therefore, exhorts all to wake up and work out their pathway to Ek Omkar with the help of the Name. Those who hear and understand Nanak's utterance become able to free themselves from this thraldom of sleep by constantly and conscientiously sowing the seed of goodness or godliness in life and rooting out the weeds of evil or godliness in life.[1] Nanak further points out, like the Saint Krishnanand that thieves and robbers pounce upon men while they are asleep and deprive them of the principal capital which they possess. Passions in the form of lust, anger, pride or attachment are the thieves etc., and the Divinity is the riches. Devoid of divinity men are not welcome to God, and prisoners of passions are the worst victims of Death, says Nanak. He emphasizes that people, under the spell of ignorance, attach all importance to the pleasures of flesh and equate satisfaction of their desires with happiness. This criticism of sleep by Nanak finds its echo in the denunciation of sleep offered by John Bunyan in his "Pilgrims Progress". In his following celebrated passage, Bumyan slashes at sleep thus: "O wretched man that I am that I should so indulge the flesh, as to use that rest for ease to my flesh, which the Lord of the hill hath erected only for the relief of the spirits of Pilgrims. Oh thou sinfur sleep ! How, for thy sake, am I like to be benighted in my journey, I must hear the noise of doleful creatures ranging in the night for their prey, and if they should meet with me in dark how should I shift them? How should I escape being by them torn to pieces ?[2]

In these words Bunyan curses the "sinful sleep" under the spell where of man's most precious spiritual possession is snatched away from him by the robber passions that attack him. Man has come to life in human garb for the pilgrimage of self realisation, but as misfortuness have it, he falls a prey to passions and his journey into the self is hampered.' Life of passions is the principal hurdle on the pathway of spiritual life. The awareness of the need of overcoming this hurdle backed by man's grit determination to wake up in the light of Name[3] is a sure incentive to his spiritual life, says Nanak.

Repentance for past Sins.

Consciousness of Sin

The sense of delusion of blindness, and of sleep is not the only incentives to spiritual life; the consciousness of sin too

1. Nanak Vain p. 295. Rag Asha Kafi M.1. Astpadi.
2. Path way to God in Hindi Literature, Professor R.D. Ranade, p. 9.
3: Hymns of Guru Nanak. Translated by Kushwant Singh, p. 105.

serves as a very powerful incentive. Love of the Lord, gratefulness toward God for the descent of His grace on the aspirant repentance for attachment with the things or joy's of the temporal world, a sense of elation on turning one's back on samsar are some of the major psychic reactions of one who once a sinner is now a seeker of God's mercy.[1] A study of Nanak's hymns amply bears out that a consciousness of sin might also enable us to realise God.

The question might arise: what is sin? To forget God is to commit sin i.e., sin is God's forgetfulness by jiva. To forget Him is man's positive act of denying His existence, omnipresence and authority. It is a stark disobedience by man of God's Word. It is a wilful turning away...from Hari and implies a deliberate choice on the part of man to open his lustful eyes on the world of passions. Ego is the root of Sin. Duncan Greenless in his "The Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib" raises a question "what is sin or Evil ?" and answers thus: "The deliberate turning from the service of God to the service of the petty 'self', and the seeking of worldly pleasures for their own sake. That is, it is the wilful disobedience of what is known to be God's will."[2]

What happens to the sinner is quite terrifying. In this very life, he suffers by desprivation of grace and the enlightening bliss of saintly contacts; in the next, he suffers miserably in Hell,[3] the result of his own ill deeds, until he falls back, deliberately indeed in the lap of the Gracious and merciful God.[4] The agonizing experiences of the sinner in the hellishness of life creates an acute sense of awe and fear, and struck by the depressing feeling of horror he prostrates at the feet of the Almighty, bemoans his lot, cures himself for the evils perpetrated by him, and approaches Him with beseachful prayers seeking His shelter and mercy. Nanak says:

My heart is fearful, to whom should I cry (for help) ?[5]

The overwhelming fear-psychosis born of the serverity of pain, sorrow and misery experienced by the sinner impells him to turn toward Hari, the destroyer of misery ameliator of lot and bestower of blessings. Precisely, therefore, the very awareness of man that he is the greatest sufferer in life only because of his

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1. Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, Prof. R.D. Ranade.
2. 'The Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib', Ducan Greenless, p. CL XXX.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 211. Rag Gaudi Chati M.1.
4. Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib. Duncan Greenless, p. CL XXX. Question No. 26.
5. Nanak Vani, p. 408. Rag Dansari Mahala 1.

gross blunder of entering the servitude of Ego insted of Ek Omkar,[1] serves as another incentive to spiritual life.

It is noteworthy that the consciousness of sin is not the same thing as consciousness of what society considers evil, bad or unethical In a communist society there is nothing like, Sin, for sin has its meaning only in association with totality of those values which have roots in belief in God. God has no place in the communist thinking, but the norms of social life do have value in communist societies also. They too regard certain acts as good or bad. harmful or helpful, human or inhuman. The consciousness of bad or evil on the part of a communist may serve as an incentives to material life, but not to spiritual life. Consciousness of evil accompanied by simultaneous consciousness of the efficacy of divine shelter as the only way of redemption from the stains of evil life alone can be a surer incentive to spiritual life.[2]

This dual consciousness has the potential power to create in the heart of the evil-doer i.e , the sinner a feeling of remorse for the sins committed by him. This inner self remonstrance, if it leads man to repent at the alter of the Lord, serves as a powerful incentive to spiritual life.

Sinners are not believers

Guru Nanak, therefore, asks the sinners i.e., the non-believers to repent for their worldliness, their deeds of violence, their sex perversions, their money madness etc., and to pray to the Almighty so that they might imbibe virtues in place of vices in their life. Chastity and purity of mind, word and deed Counts in the spiritual rejuvenation of man. Repeatedly does thus Nanak say, "Relinquish your sins and have recourse to good actions; Repent if you have committed any sin."[3] Putting briefly, God willing, the dual consciousness of evil and of God's grace as the only annihilator of all evil serves as an incentives to spiritual life. The event of the Queen of Kamroop[4] repentantly falling at the feet of Nanak and that of the sajan Thug[5] beseachingly asking to the Guru forgiveness and mercy are ready instances on the point.

The Dual Consciousness

The moment man begins to believe that God is, that God is Deathless, and that God alone is the Nectar in the form of Name,

1. Nanak Vani, p. 447. Rag Suhi M. 1. Kafi.
2. Ibid., p. 465. Var Suhi M. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 394. Rag Sorath. M. 1. Chaupada.
4. Ibid., pp. 450-51. Rag Suhi. M. 1.
5. Ibid., p. 437. Rag Suhi M. 1. Chaupada.

he starts repenting for his indulgence in worldliness, in the things and joys of earthly existence, in the passionate pursuit of the pleasures of flesh. Remorse and repentance lie at the root of man's inner sensuring of his own sins, which in fact becomes a major incentive for man's journey into the life of spirit. The realisation of one's imperfection, sinfulness and lowliness, which is concommitant to the aforesaid dual consciousness and which is very aptly described in the following hym of Nanak serves as a very powerful spiritual incentive. Says Guru Nanak: "I am a great sinner, an apostate: a pretender; Thou art my Immaculate, folmless Lord. When I taste Thy Nectar Name, I am Imbued with bliss, so, O, Lord, I seek Thy Refuge. O, My creator Lord, thou art the pride of the meek. Yea, he who mergeth in Thy True word, gathers all the riches and glory in his skirt, Thou art my perfect Lord, I am imperfect, Thou art deep and unfathomable, while I am shallow. With thee am I ever imbuded, and my tongue utters and mind Reflects on Thee. Thou art my only True Lord, my being is permeated with Thee: Yea, I have become True knowing the Mystry of the word. They, who are inebriated ever with the Lord's Name, are pure: the others who come and go, are false. There is not another like my Lord, so who else is to be praised. Yea, no one equal my Lord. Prayeth Nanak: 'I am the slave of the Lord's slaves: It is through the Guru's instruction that I know my God.'[1]

The state of consciousness of sin makes man realise that he is the sea of sins and sovereign among sinners. "As the ocean is full of water, so are we full of sins; Have mercy, have mercy upon us, thou who can float sinking stones.[2]

Remembering God as the way out

Only by remembering God can thus be man freed from the spell of Sin. The significant import and the underlying idea in the consciousness of sin seems to be that the greatest sin man is capable of doing is his forgetfulness of God which, in its turn, means man's ingratitude to his creator and the bestower of a beautiful form. It also implies that the ingrates have no place in the world of spirit, and that till they re-open their eyes to the lotus feet of God and seek mercy of Him, they go deep down in the long series of eighty four lakhs of births and deaths in quick succession. Says Guru

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1. (a) Nanak Vani, p. 391. Rag Sorath. M.1. Chaupada.
   (b) Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Translated by Dr Gopal Singh. p. 578.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 214. Rag Gauri Cheti M.1.

V (Jait Sri Rag): "The ungrateful has forgetten the Master, he shall wander through many births[1] and fall in the mire of hell.[2]

From the aforegoing discussion of the consciousness of sin, it transpires that certain psychic reactions are aroused in the minds of persons who become aware of their having fallen apart from God, with whom they are integrally united. To forget Him and to be separated from Him is the worst sin of ingratitude and the noblest of all human acts is the remember Him and be united with Him for ever. Nanak rightly speaks of the 'jiva' and 'Paramatma' as the drop in the sea and sea in the drop[3] in the same vien as Lord Krishana speaks to Arjuna in XV discourse of Srimad Bhagwad Gita.

It is most unfortunate of man to fall into the mortal error of 'Prabhu-Vismriti", of forgetfulness of God. There is no sin more cursed than man's dememorization of God, There is no act holier than the loving rememberance of His name.

Next to the psychic reaction in the form of pure gratitude comes to reaction of repentance. True repentance consists in man's incessant meditation on the Name with the pristine understanding that every breath gone without His name is a sinful waste of time and that no one else in the world than the Name is the real support or shelter. This reaction of repentance may find its expression in flooding tears of an aspirant as it did in case of Monica, the mother of St. Augustine or in loveful devotion to the Lord as in the case of Kabir, Sur and Tulsi or selfless service of people as in the case of St. Augustine, the second founder of Christianity,[4] or in abject surrender at the holy feet of the Sadguru as in the case of the Black Magic Queen of Kamaroop and the Sajan Thug about whom we have already spoken above.

It is thus obvious that the consciousness of sin and the accompanying feeling of remorse and indignation at the sinful life led by man as also the attending cumulative awareness of God alone as the washer of sins go a long way in inspiring man to shunt the train of his life from the delusive line of sinfulness to the divine line of Godfulness. Only then this consciousness serves as a sure incentive to mystical life.

Disease, Decay and Death

The consciousness of sin thus described may instil in human heart the idea of the inevitability of the cursed old age and death.

1. Message of Sikhism, Harbans Singh. p. 173.
2. Ibid.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 567. Rag Ram Kali Ki Var. M. 1.
4. Pathway to God in Hindi Literature. Prof. R. D. Ranade, p. 23.

Some do die young without having any opportunity to entertain old age as guests in their life spans Barring them, old age visits all creatures as the fore runner of death and waits upon them till the last flicker of life. The visitation of old age is often accompanied by minor messengers of yama, the God of Death, who systematically exact from their host, multiple tolls viz., power of ear to hear, light of eye to see, strength of tongue of utter, ease and ability of nose to breathe, powers of body to move or walk at will etc. Old age virtually exhausts man both physically and mentally and this exhaustion often makes him chicken hearted. The awareness of old age and its weful spell of exterminating the very vitality of man might inject into him the idea or feeling of the futility of the pride of the youth, pelf and power. And, if this feeling persists and the haunting ghost of old age compels man to seek shelter in the supranatural Reality, the notion of withering age might serve, with Guru's grace, as a spur to the pursuit of spiritual life. And, in the wake of this realisation man might bemoan the loss of his sight, audibility, utterability, vitality etc. and prayingly express himself in Nanak's word thus:

> "When I forget Thee many sorrow assail me.
> Lord, foresake me not in my afflictions,
> My eyes have lost their light
> My tongue hath lost its taste
> No sound echo in my ear with the aid of
> crutches my feet move forward.
> Such is the harvest of bitter fruit reaped
> By those who serve not God."

Considerations of old age

Thus understood, even the old age becomes the well wisher of man, for it is the devitalizing spell of old age that makes man realise the obviously throbbing pains amidst the pleasurable currents of age and ego. Old age compels man to hear the voice of the self within and follow the dictates of conscience. It imparts the lesson of intropection by goading man to turn inward his outward gaze, and paves for him thereby a path of spiritual kinship with the immortal He, the Eternal one. The consciousness of old age, thus conceived offers the most valuable gift of 'looking within' and serves as an immensely powerful spiritual incentive to man.

Old age is in a way an experience of loss, on the one hand, and of the unreliability of the powers of body and mind as well as of the relations of friendship and domesticity on the other. For,

Who does not regard that this is 'my' body, this is 'my' power of speech, this is 'my' eye, this is 'my' hand as so on? Every-body does. But the old age takes away the power of eye to see, of tongue to speak, of throat and nose to easily breathe, of ear to hear, of legs to walk, to hands to lift, of body to mate, of personality to impress, of wit to excel etc.[1] Likewise, the prolonged old age forces man to grow into gradual realisation that all those near and dear ones on whom he could legitimately rely and pride in foresake him one by one till he is left in his lone wilderness. The loss of one's own physical and intellectual vigour and vitality protrudes itself in one's eye in all its nakedness: the utter untrustworthiness of human relations becomes inalienable part of his understanding. But the experience of this loss and non-dependability of relations is of no avail till one gains the memory of his eternal link with the Real and gets lodged permanently in the loving meditation on the Name of the only reliable one, God. Gratitude to the old age as a powerful reminder of the Lord to whom alone we should all belong thus serves a verys trong incentive to spiritual life.

It is on account of the dreadful experiences which old age gives man that the Saints of all climes and ages have unequivocally asked man to never forget two things in life: Death and God. For, death befalls the Godless ones; Godful-ones alone are deathless. Nanak Deva says "that (death) is the lot of all those who have forgotten (God) and those who remember Him are beyond death."[2] Mortality of man is the result of his sinfulness, separation from God being the original sin. Though destined for immortal bliss, by the delusive pleasures of the world the soul of man is trapped in the false belief that the body is his self and that the needs of the body are his own wants. Thus entrapped in the perishable things of the world, body itself being one of them, bodily death is common to all who take the body. Guru Nanak points out that this human body is just like ash and when the life leaves the body it falls motionless and still and is only a corpse fit to be burnt, buried or blown into the blue for being disposed of. Then the ash returneth to ash.[3] This reminds us of the famous Biblical saying: "from dust hath thou come, and unto dust shalt thou go." No use then to take pride and enjoy glory in the might, majesty and beauty of the body. Says a Hindi mystic poet, Prabhudass, in his poem: "Why does thou

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1. Saint Pyradas. Quoted by Parsu Ram Chaturvedi in his Utri Bharat ki Sant Parmpera, P. 444.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 310. Rag Asha M.1 Pati.
3. Ibid, p. 108. Sri Rag M-1.

forget, thou hast to mingle with dust some day[1]. Dust thou art and to dust thou shall return".[2] Mortality is thus the inevitable fate of the biological world, as immortality is the reality of the spiritual life.

Whoever Is Born Dies

Guru Nanak, therefore, declares at the trumpet beat : "O Brother, those who have come, will have to quit; this world is an expanse of falseness."[3] Every thing, which man thinks or feels as his, will be left in this world at the time of death. Nanak tells: "who ever is born lives and dies. In this interval he eats and drinks. At that abode (of God) where consideration (of the balance sheet of man's activities) takes place, there nothing and nobody goes with the dead."[4] Even the kings and sovereigns have died; the pirs die, so do the gods, demons, men and women, aspirants and siddhas. All die (save God) and all their belongings lie in this very world. Dispossessed of life, man is dispossessed of all his property. Nothing goes with the dead.[5] What is that then on which man takes a vain glorious pride? Once this realisation dawns upon human being that to God alone he belongs and that only His Name is to be meditated upon, the consciousness of old age and death serves as a surer incentive towards the spiritual life of man. For if the effects of the old age serve as the messengers of death, the fearful effects of death on the dying or dead human figure cannot but evoke in the thinking minds the urgency of finding the way out.

Terrible Effects of Death

Guru Nanak gives a pictursque and vivid description of the bodily contours the very spell of death creates: "When the soul departs, dreadful is the empty career; The fire of the body leaves and ceases the smoke of breath: All one's five senses, organs[6] then cry that they were guiled by duality.[7] O Fool, gather the Good, and meditate on Ram.

> Ego and avarice are enticing: so are all deceived.
> They, who forget the Name and devote themselves
> to another task,

1. Bible.
2. (a) Quoted from Prof. R.D. Ranade's book-Pathway to God in Hindi Literature—p. 25.
   (b) Nanak Vani, p. 808. Slok Sahaskrati M.1.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 383. Rag Vadhans. M.1.
4. Ibid., P. 102. Rag Asha M.1.
5. Ibid., p. 187. Rag Majh M.1. Astpadi.
6. The five jnanendriyas, namely the powers of hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling.
7. Nanak Vani, p. 114. Sri Rag. M.1. English Translation of Guru Granth Sahib by Gopal Singh, P. 22-23.

They burn in the fire of duality, yea; and
they are burnt off by the fire of Desire;
They alone whom Guru saved, came up;
the rest were drowned in the whirl-pool of
strife. Their avarice goes, goes their
attachment, enmity. Goes also their ego,
their strife, their anger, love of the
great illusion, on whom is the Grace of
God: they attain to truth, their mind being
ever in a state of poise.
By True living they find the Truth and
Receive the wisdom of the Guru.
They are neither born, nor do they die:
their comings and goings are ended.
Nanak: they, the Blessed ones, are Honoured
in the Lords court, and are offered the robe.[1]

In this poetic meditation, Guru Nanak first points out the effect of death on the body. When the soul takes off from the body, the latter becomes emptied of everything that keeps it throbbing with life. This empty, lifeless corpse looks very dreadful. The light gets extinguished and the inflow and outflow of breath come to a dead stop. All the faculties of the body get fatally closed. And, the relations seemingly bemoan the death and hastily dispose of the body. Even a little reflection upon this phenomenon of death will bear out how false and deceptive are (1) man's ego and attachment: ego in one's powers, pelf or youth; attachment with the possessions and joys of worldly life and (ii) human, rather worldly relations of being father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, friend, foes and the like. Blinded by passions and puffed up by Ego, man is easily deluded by maya and his memory of his being an integral and inseparable part of the single, he is destroyed.[2] And, this separateness from God is man's real death. If man wants to weep, he must do so only for this separation and not for anything or person, lost or dead. Thus it is that Guru Nanak Deva admonishes and urges man to constantly remember God and earn goodness and live by truth so that he might be as deathless and birthless as God is. For jiva is essentially Shiva. That is, a living spark of the Eternal Light, God. Man is the human embodiment of that Light. Only when man identifies himself with the Immortal.

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 114. Sri Rag. M.1.
   English Translation of Guru Granth Sahib by Gopal Singh, p. 22-23.
2. Ibid., p. 114. Sri Rag M.l.

He, and not with the mortal body, that he becomes the crowned gateman of God's Eternal abode.[1]

Metaphysically, thus, the 'un-regenerate' man i.e., man who has lost his link with the Parmatman, is already into the jaws of death,[2] right from the first breath inhaled by him at birth. Every moment man dies till his body finally falls soulless. Only those moments are beyond 'kaala' (i.e., death) which are the moments of meditation on the Name divine. It follows that they never die who resort to and reside in God.

Philosophic Contemplation on Death

A sincere contemplation on the ravages of Death (on human body) is capable of creating a psychosis of grasping the real unrealities of the body, the world, and the domestic relations of all sorts. "Those whom you have loved in life will begin to despise you as soon as you are dead" says Surdas. "Others will be afraid of you, lest you might be turned into a ghost, catch hold of and devour them. In either case your relatives will insist upon your body being turned out of the house immediately after your death ' [3] Guru Nanak like Surdas, exhorts man to give up tomfoolery and seek the company of the Children of God, the Saints; to sing songs of His glory and fix his heart and mind at the feet of the Master. For, without realizing God, life is a sinful waste.[4]

An upsurge of such a psychological reflection consequent upon the philosophical contemplation on the depradation caused to human body by death has the tendency to push men along the path of God-realisation. It does thus become a powerful incentive. Guru Nanak, therefore, asks men not to fall in the error of enjoying romances of the body, for men are not bodies. To do so is only to caste away flowers and collect weeds instead [5] He says :

"Riches, beauty and flowers are the guests of few days. Like the lotus leaves, they whither away as they sprout Enjoy thy self, my love, till thy beauty is green. When thy brief days tire out, and thy coat wears off, thou goest, O my dear, beauteous one, to sleep in the grave."

"If thou deepest, in thy parents home thou hast been robbed

1. Nanak Vani, Page 114. Sri Rag M.1.
2. Ibid., 184. Rag Magh M.1.
3. Path Way to God in Hindi Literature, Professor R.D. Ranade, p.28.
4. Nanak Vani, p. 802. Sloke Sahskarti M.I.
5. I bid,, p. 114. Sri Rag M.1.

in the broadday light. Yea, Nanak, thou hast scattered away thy flower and gathered alone the weeds."[1]

Professor R.D. Ranade thus says that 'a philosophic contemplation on Death becomes a powerful incentive to the spiritual life'. He further adds that many a philosopher of antiquity, like the Stoics, made a continuous use of it. Even the Epicureans tell us not to be afraid of Death; for they say 'when we are, Death is not.' St. Paul, the great Christian apostle, used to sav "I die daily." The core of the saying is that if we keep the fact of death perpetually in our attention, we mav be enthused or impelled to devote ourselves to the holy pursuit of spiritual life. This inspirational incentive gradually culminates in unshakeable realisation that death is on the door step for each one of us, and it becomes us to think how much of God's precious Name is really treasured in our heart, so that we may not go altogether empty to the world beyond; that what is to be feared is not the death of the body but the greater death, which is forgetting of the Lord and which dips us again again in the hell of earthly wombs; that all save God are subject to death; and that it is, as such, man's sacred most trust and task to ceaselessly remember Him round the clock and annul thereby the migration of 'Jiva' from one 'yoni' i.e., raiment to the other. Precisely, the whole world is bound by death; without the grace of God death is invincible; but they alone, who meditate on the Word (i.e., on God's name) cut the noose of Death and become one with the One.

The Endless Cycle of Birth and Rebirth :

Next to the consciousness of old age and death, as one of the most powerful incentives to spiritual life, comes the genuine quest of life beyond death. Man's inquisitiveness as to what happens after death has been, in its ultimate analysis, a strong psychic force in pushing him on the pathway of spiritual life. The great question persists whether there is life before birth and after death and the saints and seers of the ages and climes have given the answer in the positive. These God's men, both in the East and West, have asserted ever and anon (except the Christians and Mohamedans[2]) that the 'jiva' is subject to the eternal law of transmigration. The philosophers and psychologists all the world over have thought hard on this question and their views deny life for the soul of a man after it leaves the human body. Others affirm life beyond death. Still others declare that there is not only transmigration of soul, but also

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1. Translation in English of Sri Guru Granth Sahib by Dr. Gopal Singh, p. 26.
2. Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, Professor R.D. Ranade, p. 29.

metempsychosis i.e., the soul of a man not only migrates from one human raiment to another, but takes as many and as varied raiments as is divinely ordained. Guru Nanak expresses with astounding candidness his belief in the transmigration as well as in the metempsychosis of the soul. First of all, he raises the Great Question 'Where does he come from ? Where does he go ?[1] Having raised the first question : "The man is born and he dies; O, where from does he come ? Yea, whence he cometh and whither goeth he ?"[2] Guru Nanak asks in the same vein the second question :

"Why is he bound down, how is he released ?

How does he merge in the Great peace of Eternal Lord ?"[3]

Then Nanak proceeds to answer these questions thus:

"O, he who hath the Nactar-Name in the

heart and the mouth,

And dwells on it, becometh detached like

the Lord (1st pause).

"He cometh and goeth in peace, as is the Natural Law. He is born of (the desires of) the mind; and mergeth into the mind again. The Godwards are Emancipated and go not the Round (again). For, they dwell on the Word and through the Name get Deliverance. (2nd Bause). On the tree (of life) abide many, many birds at night; of these some are happy, some not; and lured by the desires of mind, they all perish. Night and day they look (longingly) towards the skies. And wander about in all directions, as is the writ of Karma." (3rd pause).[4]

From the utterance of Nanak given above, it is evident that he believes in the transmigration of soul and that this journey of soul comes to its final end only when the Nectar Name is permannently lodged on the tip of the pilgrim's tongue Only the God-bound is not bound in the cycle of 'coming and going', only when 'jiva' establishes its perfect communion or merger with 'Shiva' that the wheel (of births and rebirths) releases 'jiva' from its hellish spell. Says Nanak:

"He who dies with the divine Word on his lips dies to death

He need not die a second time.

Without the Word, people wander in error.

They die only to be reborn, over and over again."[5]

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 204 Rag Gaudi. M I.
2. Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Translated in English by Dr. Gopal Singh, p. 15: Vol. I.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 145-46.
5. Hymns of Guru Nanak, Translated by Dr. Kushwant Singh, p 84.

The Fate of the Manmukha

Having raised and resolved the question of the transmigration of soul, Guru Nanak gives a detailed description of the innumerable 'yonis' (raiment) human soul has to pass through till, by the Grace of Guru, it is finally emancipated from this cyclic bondage.

Guru Nanak points out that the 'jiva' has to enter the hell of eighty four lakhs of births if it fails to seek the shelter of the Unborn Eternal One "Those who are 'manmukha' i.e , the Godless fools", says Nanak Deva, "have to suffer the hellfire of eighty four lakhs of yoni" [1]

Here the human inquisitiveness may tarry a little and ponder over this arithmatical figure. Where from does Nanak bring this number of eighty four lakhs? Is it enevitable for a 'jiva' to pass through all these 'yonis'? Is this number of eighty four lakhs fixed and so rigid that one shall have to come and go from yoni to yoni till the cycle of eighty four lakhs takes its full round? As regards the first question, the word of Nanak alone is to be taken for granted. He says that nothing that is uttered by him is unbacked by experience. His utterances are the natural outflow of his meditations on the Name of God.[2] The number in question is not the product of Nanak's imagination, nor has he customarily borrowed it from the saying of other saints contemporaneous or preceding him in age. He emphatically lays down that there are only eighty four lakhs yonis, nothing more and nothing less.[3] Nanak's assertion on the exactitude of the number can not but he said to have the infallible flavour of his spiritual experience. Nanak must have thus divined the number. In regard to the second question whether the transmigration of soul from womb to womb till the eighty four lakhs of yoni are passed through, it may be useful to keep absolute reliance on Nanak's divination which says that inescapably it has to. The immutable law of transmigration can, however, be annulled only by jiva's absolute surrender at the omnipresent feet of Parabrahma, the Lord. The annulment of transmigration is complete and bears the authenticity of divine stamp only when the 'jiva' establishes its easy communion with the Ek Onkar by drinking deep at the ambrosiac ocean of they Nectar-Name. "Then there is no death for that jiva, neither does he come nor does he go".[4] This 'vani' or utter-

1. (a) Nanak Vani, p. 310. Rag Asha M.1, Pati.
   (b) Ibid., p. 237. Rag Gaudi M.1. Astpadi.
2. Ibid., p. 431, Rag Tilang Sabad. M.1
3. Ibid., p. 522. Rag Ram Kali., M.1, Dakhni Onkar.
4. Ibid., p. 148 Rag Dhansari. M.1. Astpadi.

ance of Nanak also includes the reply to the last question. Separated from God one has to journey from yoni to yoni till the cycle of births and rebirths completes its round.

Reasons for Transmigration

Nanak does not stop at the inevitability of soul's transmigration. He gives us reason for these wanderings of 'jiva'. I-ness is the root of all this coming and going.[1] This 'I-ness' is the result of jiva's separation from God or of his forgetfulnees of God. Without the root Anchor, the egoically cut-away 'jiva' gets bound by the triple chord of wordliness and is thus caught up in the wheel of births and deaths.[2] Entrapped in the world of the three 'gunas' the 'jiva' assumes air and asserts his power and understands that he alone is the doer of all the things in life. He frets and frowns, smiles and showers joys on others, wails and weeps. The moment he forgets God, the Ego takes hold of his mind and since ego gives rise to passions, and passions to attachment, the jiva' becomes a prisoner of attachments, passions and prejudices. Once a prisoner, the jiva acts according to the dictates of I-ness; and he has to suffer or smile as per the evil or good done by him. His actions alone are in essence the moving finger of fate which binds him down to the wheel of yoni. Says Nanak:

> "Words do not the saints or sinner make. Action alone is written in the book of fate; what we sow that alone we take.
>
> O, Nanak, be saved or for ever transmigrate."[3]

In other words, Nanak believes in the seed-and-harvest theory which is in no way different from the Vedic theory of Karma. 'As you sow, so you reap' is the essence of this 'Karmic' Law. Evil deeds are attended by hellish suffering and good deeds are accompanied by heavenly pleasures. The Law of Karma is thus related to the idea of heaven and hell. All beings are subject to this law except those who are the loveful devotees of God i.e., those who are 'Gurmukhi'. To sum up, then, the Godless 'jivas' are crushed under the weight of the wheel of yonis; the Godful ones are spared the tortures of the rounds of births and rebirths. It is all done under the command of God, the 'Hukam'. All are under it. Not only in the laws governing the structure and the functioning of the physical universe is this command most immediately perceptible, it is also explicitly visible in moral terms in the Law of Karma.

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 334. Rag Asa M.1. Sloka.
2. Ibid., p. 209. Rag Gaudi Gurari M.1. Chaupadai.
3. Hymns of Guru Nanak. Translated by Dr. Kushwant Singh, p. 52.

"One receives in accordance with what one does; What you sow, that you must eat."[1]

The conclusion to be drawn from the above discussion is that each individual should perform those deeds which will, in accordance with the law of Karma, bring the supreme reward of fullness and freedom of life, of emancipation. And the supreme deed for man is to realize the Lord enshrined in his own heart.[2]

Thus the very consciousness that the soul has to suffer through the hell fire of moving from yoni to yoni till the cycle of life and death takes its full round, and that the tortures and torments of the soul's ceaseless migration can be ended by resorting to the meditation on God's Name is enough to serve as a very powerful incentive to man's spiritual life.

Nanak, like Kabir, believes that all the creatures who are born are the inescapable subjects of transmigration. Even the God Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh—have to take on birth after birth and thus belong to this whriling community.[3] In his references to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv Nanak aceepts their existence as real, but they appear as 'creatures of God, deprived of all functions and subject to maya and to death'[4]

The meaning of Metempsychosis

As in transmigration, so in metempsychosis Guru Nanak's belief is markedly evident Transmigration implies only the process of a soul's passage from the body, but metempsychosis implies, says R.D Ranade, the taking on of another body after the passage.[5] Many others, such as the followers of the Brahma Kumari Cult of Mt. Abu, totally rejected the idea of metempsychosis and strongly uphold the view that a human being will be reborn only in the human body and not in the form of animals, birds etc. But Guru Nanak says that the 'jiva' not only migrates from one body to another of the same type but to different categories also. A jiva as a man in one particular life may, according to his evil or good deeds, either take on again the form of the higher yoni of a human being or slip into the lower yoni of various kinds till by God's grace the fetters of mortality are broken down. Nanak says that 'jiva' takes on

1. Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion. W.H. Mcleod. p. 201. Adi granth, p. 662.
2. Ibid., p. 202. Adi granth, p. 1107.
3. Quoted by Prof. R.D. Ranade in his book—Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p. 30.
4. Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion. W.H. Mcleod, p.-166.
5. Pathway to God in Hindi Literature—Prof. R.D. Ranade, p. 31.

several aprons as a result of his passionate urges. In Rag Gaudi Purvi, Nanak sings out in the second pause of the eleventh hymn that he 'takes on innumerable raiments owing to the passionate thirst' for slaking the needs of the body. What does the term stand for ? The following meditational hymn of Nanak throws some light on it :

"O my Lord, who can comprehend thy excellences; None can recount my sinfulness. Many times I was born as a tree, many times as an animal, many times I came in the form of a snake, and many times I flew as a bird. 1

Many times did I break into city shops, strong buildings, and having burgled into them returned home. I looked ahead and behind, but how could it be concealed from Thee ? 2

(I have visited) places of pilgrimage on river banks, tiraths, shops, cities, markets; I have seen all regions of the world. Taking scales I have weighted (my merit against demerits) in my heart. 3

As the oceans are filled with water, so immense is my sinfulness. Be merciful, show a measure of Thy Grace that this sinking stone may cross over. An undying fire burns my soul; within (my heart) a knife twists. Nanak prays (show me Thy Grace for he who by it) understands Thy divine order attains eternal peace."[1] 4

It is thus quite evident that the 'jiva', according Nanak, falls into several realms of life: the botanical realms; the zoological realm; and the ornithithological realm i e., the realm of winged birds that fly viz; crow, parrot, hawk etc The list does not exhaust here. Somewhere else, in Rag Ramkali 1.7 (ii) Guru Nanak also makes a reference to the eschatological realm (i e , the realm of the ghosts) in these words: "(you) have not practised yet (yoga), sat (truth), sanyam (control) and sheel (good conduct); (so) you will be in the wood like preta (a ghost) yoni."[2]

It implies that 'jiva' in the 'preta' yoni leads a heartless life devoid of all tenderness, piety and compassion.

Nanak's conception of Metempsychosis

Nanak's description of soul's passage, after the death of body, from yoni to yoni or from body to body has some parallel in the seven possibilities which Kabir predicates for the soul after the final

1. Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion. W H. Mcloed, p. 214.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 511. Rag Ram Kali M.1. Asipadi.

collapse of the body. This description is not so vivid as is given by Shakespeare who speaks of the seven stages of man's life in 'As you like it". But the way out as suggested by Nanak is coincidentally the same as given out by Kabir. He says that if you do not look out for the everlasting Name of God, you will have to repent deeply within yourself and descend by the downward ladder to the lowest rung of perdition. Nanak, therefore, categorically points out: "Whom should I blame ? I should not; for the fault lies in my own deeds. I reap what I sowed. Do not cast blame on others."[1] The actions so tie down the jiva to the exact adjudication of award that the jiva is no more than a wooden toy in the hands of the Bajigar, the juggler God. The jiva like a puppet puts on garments as the puppetshow master gives it and dances to his tune. "What can an orphaned wooden puppet do?"[2] It is a very significant query. The epithet signalizes the fatherless condition of the 'jiva' which, in its separateness from God, is as dead as a dry wood. And, this condition is the bitter fruit of Jiva's forgetfulness of Para Brahma, the eternal one; and as the seed, so the harvest. Jiva's long, harzardous and horrifying journey across various round of rebirths is the harvest of fate which jiva itself unknowingly writes with the pen of his own actions. Why then bemoan the lot, and why blame one's stars, or curse others for one's own follies ? Nanak says that jiva is very fortunate, to acquire, through virtuous actions in birth after births, this human body which is the rarest opportunity[3] for reviving the memory of his being the inalienable part of God. He is indeed a very fortunate human being who has realised, through Guru's grace, his primordial and ultimate oneness with the Birthless and Deathless one. Nanak says that only when man enshrines in his heart the holy meditation on the Nectar Name, he is for ever released from the fetters from the frets and frowns of fate, from the torments of the pathetic and painful darkness of the long tunnel of yoni after yonis, from the grip of the I-ness which is the root of all worldliness. It is thus immensely important to remember that the very awareness of the tortures and sufferings of the endless passage of soul through multiple forms and yonis might act as one of the very potent incentives to spiritual life.

Helplessness And Frustration :
The Inscrutability of Invisible Power

Like blindness and illusion, like consciousness of sin, like old

1. Nanak Vani, p. 310 Rag Asha Pati. 21.
2. Sri Guru Granth Darshan, p. 165. Jay Ram Misra.
3. (a) Nanak Vani, p. 446. Rag Sahi M.1. Kafi, Gharu 10.
   (b) Ibid., p. 467. Bilavalu M.1. Chaupada.

age, decreptitude and death and like transmigration and metempsychosis, the utter helpessness and frustration in life's experience might also constitute a powerful incentive to the spiritual life of a person. There are certain moments in the life of every being when that being, under the spell of utter confusion, painful isolation and friendless situation finds itself so forlorn, and so desolate that it experiences helplessness beyond repair. Such moments of agony, despair and exhausting rootlessness have the potency of throwing man in the lap of God with the understanding of his nothingness in this gignatic universe before the inscrutable power which controls the destinies of the world. The bitter and unforgettable experience of acute frustration leads to man's awarness of the invisible power whose ways are mysterious and incomprihensible; and the inscrutability of that power might express itself in one of the following forms. Either it might concern itself with the unknowability and therefore, with the unpredictability and incalculability of that power. Prof R.D. Ranade remarks that 'this would be a reasonably scientific attitude'.[1] But it may also assume the metaphysical shape of a belief in the non-erasable dictates of fate. and may result in the unpurposive view of the world Even some of the acclaimed politicians sometimes express themselves in favour of such power and call it providence or fate. A third alternative may be that of one's utter inferiority or nothingness before the all powerful and over-aweing influence of God. A fourth view may be expressive of man's attitude of stark modesty; of man's resignation or submission to the will of the invisible Almighty. "Surrender thyself, so may thou meet thy Lord. No other wisdom can be of any avail," says Nanak.

Let us first analyse the inscrutability of the invisible power. Nanak says that none has been able so far to fathom the power of God. "Countless sages, gods and goddesses, Siva and Brahma are absorbed in Thy service. Countless yogis and worshippers of Truth and forest-dwellers ponder (in solitude on Thy person), but none has reached the end (i.e , comprehended Thee)."[2] Guru Nanak also says: "Many there be who pretend to know, each bolder in his claim, but all I say is: Great is the Lord, great His name; what He ordains comes to be, O Nanak he who sayth more shall hereafter regret his stupidity'[3]. For he says "innumerable are the descriptions of God, but the Unfathomable is ineffable."[4] There are several meditational songs of Nanak representative of the omnipotence and indescribability

1. Pathway to God in the Hindi Literature, p. 35.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 643 Maru Sohala, M.1.
3. Ibid., p. 88 Japji (21).
4. Ibid., p. 280. Rag Asha M.1. Astpadi.

of God, but it would be very useful to quote ad verbatum Nanak's following complete hymn on the point:

"What kind Thy gate, what kind Thy abode, O Lord, where sittest thou and supportest us all? Countless the Harmonies, countless Thy minstrels, countless the tunes and musicians and players. Sing to Thee winds and water and fire; And the Dharmaraja too doth Thee admire. Sing Chitras, sing Guptas, the keepers of Record, which the Dharmaraja seeth and giveth the Award. Sings Shiva, sings Brahma, sings goddess Parvati, looking neat and pretty. Sing Indras on their Thrones, sing gods in their songs Sing the siddhas in meditation, sing the saints in ovation. Sing the celibates, sing the zealots, sing the peaceful, sing the warriors, sing the pundits, sing the Rishis, sing the Kiratas, sing the ages. Sing the Mohinis, enchanting nnd beauteous; sing the earth, the under-worlds, and the heavens. Sing the Jewels, thy creation; sing the sixty-eight (holies) in ovation. Sing the warriors, mighty, brave, sing the sources of life four. Sing the universe, earth, spheres, Thou sustaineth Thy creations. Sing they all to please Thee, yea, and are steeped in Thee, Thy devotees. Sing countless more, one can not tell; nor think, nor Nanak shall. Thou are the Eternal, the True, the Master who Is, and shall be ever hereafter. Yea, He the One who made the universe of various species, orders, colours; who watcheth all what He createth What He wills He does and would; No, none shall tell Him what he should. The highest of the High, the King of King, Nanak: His will works on all His beings."[1]

Fatalism or Belief in Fate :

From the incomprehensible infinitude of the invisible and eternal Lord whose power knows no bounds and whose ways are mysterious and unpredictable, evolves the other aspect of His finger of Fate which is so compelling that the failures and the frustrated ones can not but regard the decrees of Fate as both inevitable and unavoidable. All the misfortunes and sufferings, even crimes are directly attributed to this moving finger of God which writes the accounts of all the creatures; and thc balances of good and or bad which befall their lot individualy and separately have to be accepted. It is this understanding that makes Nanak to sing out "what was to be, has become; and what ever will be, will be; none can avert it;" Nanak further says : "How can the fore-written be erased, for it is written by His will? And that which is written by His will does come to pass."[2]

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1. Sri Guru Granth Shahib. Translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, p. 8.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 147. Sri Rag, M.1.

The Providential Writ

This utterance of Guru Nanak coupled with his another utterance ("no one can undo the written decress)[1] finds a corroborative echo in Kabir's famous song "the law or the writ of Eternity can not be altered by efforts to alter it". The paramount reason of this unalterability of the providential writ is, says Nanak, that "only that which He does, comes to pass; that done by (jiva) ingenuity is of no avail.[2] As a matter of fact, what Nanak wants to impress upon us is that whatever is pre-ordained must inevitably happen and that this writ of eternity is, in substance, written by the finger of Fate only in the colour of the deeds (of jiva). He says: 'As is writ on thy forehead, so is the working of thy soul.'[3]

This assertion of Nanak's belief in the inevitability and unalterability of the decree of fate has some wonderful aspects which merit adequate explanation and philosophic recognition.

Historic Illustrations

In the first place, it implies that what is fated can not be averted. No human power on earth can alter the course of fate or over ride the decree of providence Howsoever mighty of physique or mind a man may be, howsoever great and glorious a king may be, nobody in the universe can break the fetters of fate. Not even Samson could avert the calamitous travails in his life: not even Socrates could want to escape the penalty of sipping poison to death; not even Jesus Christ could be freed from the pain of crucifixon on the Cross. Even the Pandvas whom Lord Krishna himself guided and supported and led them to victory over the Kaurvas had to suffer. Even Arjuna, the mightiest and most excellent archer could not succeed in protecting the gopis, the damsel-devotees of Krishna, from their outrageous elopement by the Kabas, a fierce tribe which pounced upon them in arms. Even the Rama of Valmikis' Ramayan had to suffer, as per the dictates of the fate, the unbearable pangs of separation from Sita as a result of he, being treacherously abducted away by Ravan to Lanka. In brief, all the might and majesty, soldierly and scholarly genius of man are of no avail in face of the writ of eternity. The command of fate abides and the will of 'jiva' must willynilly succumb to it.

Guru Nanak gives a detailed description of all kinds of famous heroic aad intelligent potentates of yore who had to suffer

1. Nanak Vani, p, 172. Rag MaJh. M.1.
2. Ibid., p. 177, Rag Magh M.1. Astpadi.
3. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, p. 68.

the dictates of fate. "Indra came to grief cursed (by Gautama) with a thousand marks on his body resembling the female organ. Parshurama too came back home crying (for Ramchandra had denuded him of his prowess). Aja (Rama's grandsire), wailed whenhe has made to eat the dung he had given in charity Yea, so doth one suffer at the Lord's court. Rama too wailed, for he was banished, and got separated he from his wife, Sita, and brother, Lakshmana. The tenheaded Ravana cried when he lost his Lanka; yea, he, who had carried away Sita in the guise of a mendicant. The Pandavas wailed that (from Kings) they became day-labourers, with whom abided once the Lord (Krishna with his golden flute). Janamejaya grieved that he lost the way, And only for one error in life, he became a sinner. Fear too the Sheikhs and Pirs and seers and all, lest, at the time of death, they may die not in peace. Bhartrihari and other kings regretted, gnawed at the hearts that they got their ears torn: And they had to beg for alms from door to door. The miser weepeth that the riches, he assembeed, are lost in the end. The Pundit too waileth lest he loseth his wisdom. The woman crieth out for her lost spouse Sayeth Nanak, "Lo, the whole world is in pain. He, who believeth in the Name, winneth, for, no other deed is of any account to our lord, the God "[1]

In the second place, it also implies what ever is preordained can not be previsioned by the men of the world. Nanak says that what is fated can not be predicted meaning thereby that 'no one can erase the writ of Karma: I know not what my deserts be in the Yond'.[2] The unknowability of what is to be is also a significant aspect of the inscrutability and ineffability of the supreme reality, the Truth of truths, the Paramatman. Though it is admitted that the 'jiva' has to experience sorrows and joys according to the evil and good in its karmic account, yet it is a fact that the 'jiva' cannot envision in advance what befalls his lot, exactly when and in what measure. He is thus prone to believe in the mysteriousness of God's will and man's incompetence To fathom or foresee it.

In the third place, it implies that fate is not only inexorable in its execution and unpredictable in its details, it is exactly the award imparted to 'jiva' by divine justice on the basis of the (action) of the 'jiva' who does not and cannot know it. In this regard, Guru Nanak points out that "He giveth according to man's deeds"[3] In other words, Man receives justly the award of his actions.

1. (a) Nanak Vani, p 567. Rag Ramkali ki var Sloka.
   (b) Sri Guru Granth Sahib, translated by Dr Gopal Singh, p. 911., Vol. I
2. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, p. 147.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 149. Sri Rag. M.1. Astpadi.

In the fourth place, the wheel of fate has powerful dents and every one is not only the victim of their penetration into his life, but he is left completely frustrated, forlorn and isolated, at times so deeply frustrated that the overhelming fear and feeling of helplessness casts utter ruin upon his self confidence. Not only are the sources of external support and encouragement dried up, even the fountain of inner strength is as if emptied of its dynamism and delight. It is man's awareness of such an utter helplessness and hopelessness that might serve as a powerful incentive to his spiritual life.

In the fifth place, this very helpessness might, God willing, help the transition of man from his state of forgetfulness of God to that of His loving remembrance by him: and this might subsequently awaken him into the awareness that whenever good or bad, mirth or misery, pleasurable or painful that comes to pass in his life is nothing other than his own creation which he should with patience welcome and overcome.[1] For, both joys and suffering are his own creations, the Karmic products, and, as such, both should be welcome to him. The realisation of this aspect of the wheel of fate also serves as a very powerful reminder to man that his helplessness is his own creation and that he must meditate on Him alone who is merciful and helpful to all. This might rejuvenate man in his spirits and he might be inspired to bid farewell to his unregenerate condition and stage a happy welcome to the regenerate state of existence. Precisely, the sense of desolation, frustration and helplessness might serve as a meaningful incentive to man's spiritual life.

In the sixth place, the belief in fate also implies a distinction between the true 'karma' and the 'illussory' karma. Meditation on the name alone is the true deed i.e., 'Satkarma'.[2] For it is the sovereing pathway to the realisation of one's self and simultaneously to the release of 'jiva' from the prison of transmigration which spells hellish miseries and anguish upon it. To meditate on Him is to be 'Gurumukhi'. All other actions are the products of 'manmukhi' fellows and inevitably lead them into the web of Fate, the jail of maya, where they suffer and enjoy according to the theory of Fate. Thus, 'Satkarma' is a royal road to supreme selfhood and 'mayik Karma' is the cursed pathway to worldly perdition or paradise. The consciousness of one's utter helplessness in life as the punishment of one's being manmukhi might serve as an effective incentive of spiritual life.

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 748. Rag Malar M.1. Chaupada.
2. Ibid., p. 398. Rag Sorath M.1. Chaupada.

**Consciousnesss of Nothingness,
Finitude and Imperfections:**

Not only man's helplessness born of utter ruin in his life thus be a powerful incentive to his spiritual life, but man's consciousness of his nothingness in this huge and gigantic universe might also serve as an incentive thereto. Philosophers in the past and the psychologists in the present age have acclaimed that there are moments when man feels himself to be a victim of all pains and no joys in life and of circumstances beyond his control. In such moments of acute and total helplessness in life, it is very probable that he may realise his impotency and utter nothingness in this large and cruel world. He realises then the infinite power of some thing invisible and succumbs, after shocking and successive failure of his mental, moral and physical resourcefulness to face the tide of tottering economy and social condemnation, to the compelling awarness of his utter frailty, finitude and nothingness. Such a realisation of his nothingness or abject powerlessness in face of overpowering providential decrees might indeed serve as an extemely powerful incentive to one's spritual life. This mental state of one's emptiness, strengthlessness and nothingness has been variously expressed by saints and scholars of philosophy. Man finds himself in a compelling psychosis of regarding himself as one of the most insignificant creatures of the world. Rudolf Otto in his "The Idea of the Holy', says that 'creature-feeling' has been described as 'the feeling of personal nothingness',[1] before the overpowering might of the invisible power. Nanak says; "If there is anyone who has a big name and experienees the taste of his bigness, he does not know that he is, in the eye of the Lord, of Universe, a mere insect which moves picking up seeds and corns [2] In Japji, 21, Nanak echoes the same truth; "He, who thinks of himself much, is vain, and will look small in God's domain."[3] What Nanak wants to hint at is that it is vainglorious for a creature like man to assume airs and boast of his valour and wisdom. The realisation of one's creature consciousness helps one to appreciate and understand the majesty and all pervasive power of the Creator. It also works as an incentive to one's spiritual life and, as Nanak says, that one begins to regard himself as a tiny bird sheltering in the great God, Tree "Thou art Great, O Lord, As if an inaccessible and unchartable Tree; and we (all mortals) are just winged birds in Thee'.[4]

1. Idea of the Holy-Rudolf Otto, p. 17.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 277. Rag Asha M.1. Sabad.
3. I bid., p. 88.
4. Nanak Vani, p. 363. Rag Gujari M.1. Astapadi.

The Creature Consciousness

This creature-consiousness of man, in Nanak's meditational hymns, manifests itself in other forms also. Not only does Nanak regard himself as an insignificant creature before the Almighty Creator, but he stops before Him as low as does the true servant before the master. Nanak not only revels in the sacred and sincere servitude of the Eternal and the Perfect and Grand He, but further regards himself as the dust of the feet of the worshippers of God. Nanak says "I am thy servant and the dust of Thy servant's feet "[1]

Precisely, the consciousness of personal nothingness has three main facets of (1) creature consciousness (2) dust consciousness (3) slave consciousness which is no other than Otta's 'feeling of dependence of creatures on the Lord.

Feeling of Humility and
Resignation to God's will

The consciousness of personal nothingness naturally generates in man the omnipotence and everythingness of God as well as a genuine feeling of personal humility before the all time presence of the Eternal one. The feeling of dependence on Him is the prime factor in the emotion of humility which tends to abide in due course of time by the grace of God. Man grows into realisation that whatever is being done in this vast, vast universe is being done by His command and that it is no use taking pride in one's deeds of chivalry etc. For, He alone is the Master Maker and Master Player and man is His toy or playball. It, therefore, behoves man to regard God as the only Engineer of all that comes to pass in the universe. Guru Nanak prays: "O, Hari! Thou alone at the head of all are the sovereign cause and the causer."[2] This prayer finds its echo in the Christian prayer "Thou alone art. I am naught"-and is expressive of the nullity of 'I-nees' which is nothing other than the live feeling of man's utter humility It is this deeper emotion born of man's smallness and God's greatness that makes him sing in Nanak's words : 'There is none other like you;'[3] and, in the wake of this tidal feeling of humility man's heart surrenders itself to the Divine will.

Nanak's Attitude of Resignation

Rightly does Guru Nanak envision and experience the presence of the Lord everywhere at each and every moment of his life;

1. Nanak Vani, p. 426. Rag Tilang. M.1.
2. Ibid., p. 283. Rag Asha M.1. Astapadi.
3. Ibid., p. 290.

he sees Him in himself and himself in Him and He who is in him pervades all around and every where. Nanak says 'Wherever I see, I see your pervasiveness. No other place is there (for me)'.[1] In other words, Nanak's only shelter is Hari and he has submerged his will into the will of God. So he sings out in joy: "O Lord! I live as Thou want me to. (I have) Thy Name in my mouth."[2] This is a heightened sense of Nanak's resignation to the supreme will of the Lord. Nanak even goes a step further. He does not want to live as God wants him to, but prays in loving humility that 'jiau tuch Bhavai tiu Rakh Rajai."[3] Herein we see the total and absolute surrender of Nanak at the pleasure of the cosmic sovereign, the Param Prabhu. In the following psalm of Guru Nanak we come across the fuller realisation of man's feeling of humility and resignation to God's will:

"Countless Thy Names, countless Thy places, O Lord, countless the spheres, beyond all thought. No count there can ever be; with words we name Thee, hymn Thee. With words all knowledge, all praise, all song; with words all speech, all writings vogue. With words we tell of our union with Thee. But Thou aren't subject to the words Thou wrote; It's we who receive what Thy will be. The Name extends to all Thou createst. No place where Thou may'nst pervade. No power have I to tell what Thy Excellence be, sacrificed am I a myriad times unto Thee"[4]

Omnipotence and Majesty of God

With the foregoing sketchy introduction to the feeling of humility, let us now come to the philosophic analysis of the concepts of humality and resignation to God's will It is not enough to talk glibly and have a vague feeling of humility. Humility is an enlightened act of behaving humbly with refreshing cheerfulness before the omnipotence and majesty of God, on the one hand, and of behaving coolly and kindly even with all those who are humble and low in social scale keeping in view the omnipresence and magnificence of God, on the other. Humility is the oranament of the high souled (Gurumukhi). Those who are really humble, love to become the dust of every body's feet and behold God every where. Says Farid: "Deride not the dust, for there is nothing like it, while living we tread over it. And after death it gives us a cover".[5] So it is that those who dedicate themselves to the holiest task of regenerating them-

1. Nanak Vani, p. 410. Rag Dhansari M.1. Chaupada.
2. Ibid., p. 303, Rag Asha M 1. Astpadi.
3. Ibid., p. 419, Rag Dhansari M.1 Astpadi.
4. The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib, by Duncan Greenlee, p. 12.
5. Message of Sikhism, by Harban Singh, p. 138.

selves into the beauteous, baffling and bountiful fold of the Lord, regard themselves the humblest of the humble and experience the presence of God ever and anon. Guru Nanak says that 'God's eye of mercy falls on those, who take care of the lowly', and that "if weighted in a balance, the humble is weighty" Thus viewed, and quite correctly indeed, humility is the crowning virtue of the God-bound souls; it expresses itself first in the humble and holy service of God by way of Nam-Smarana and then consequent upon it in regarding even the lowliest of the lowly with love and compassion, for the latter are also the living parts of the Eternal Ek Onkar.

It is in this context that Guru Nanak asks men to cast off pride based upon caste or other status, and treat with equanimity the other folk, high or low Says he, "Perceive (in all men) the Light (of God). Donot ask (a man's) caste, for in the hereafter there is no caste."[1]

'We who have taken shelter in God are neither high, low, nor in between. We are God's servants;[2]

The sense of humility thus bases man on a very broad spectrum and asks of him to be the humblest of all which he can be only in the sincere service of God Humility is a pathway to purity of heart. It grows with the growth of man's utter surrender before the Almighty.

This attitude of humility logically tends to culminate in man's determination to live for ever at the lotus feet of God in the form of (i) unflinching and loving meditation on the Name with the tested confidence and trusted reliance on Him, resignation to God's will that implies annihilation of one's own will; and in the form of (ii) renunciation of self-centredness, self-conceit and self-pride. Simultaneously it also implies an act of absolute surrender of man at the altar of God resulting in the gradual swallowing up of his ego in mystical union with Him. In other words, man's absolute dependence on God's mercy alone sums up the true meaning of 'resignation to God's will'. Says Nanak :

"I see no friend but Thee (N. Gaure Astpadi 1:5); Time is my soul, all the body time (R. Gauri 20:1) ; I am Thy slave and the dust of Thy servant's feet (N. Tilang 1:4) ; In thy lotus feet is the home of my heart; with the rope of love is thy servant bound... What is the use of escape (Rd. Asa 4:1, 3) ?[3]

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1. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion-by Mcleod, p- 209.
2. Ibid.
3. The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib, by Duncan Greenlee, p. 12.

Nanak further points out in this context that the hundred and thousands of human beings speak of God's existence, but hardly does any one believe in it in the true sense. That is. if God is, then none else is. The only course for the believer is, therefore, to sacrifice every breath of his life in the meditation or chanting of His name. If He is, then, His will alone works. Man's will must thus simply be to reckon Him, realise Him, and rest in Him unitively for ever That should be and can be only through man's submission to the will of the Lord. For, the pathway of surrender is the highest, the noblest and the best way of God-realisation [1]

In times past and all over, the saints and seers have preached the gospel of absolute resignation to God's will. In the Bhagvad-gita, Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna to "renounce all the duties and come to my lone shelter; fear not, I shall release you from all sins."[2] The philosophy and practice of submission is the keynote of spiritual life. In the Koran, too, runs a similar note of surrendering every deed, done by man to God. "But who so ever surrenders his purpose to Allaha while doing good his reward is with the Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve."[3] The Christian philosophy of mysticium also places great emphasis on the need of man to surrender at the altar of God, if he is to rise and live in Jesus. It says : "whosoever shall seek to gain his Life shall lose it, but who so ever shall surrender his life shall preserve it "[4] Absolute resignation to the will of God is assuredly the mystical short cut to the Almighty, Unborn and Unbegun. The whole gospel of St. John which centres round the doctrine of surrender is a powerful incentive to spiritual dedication. "If a man loves me", says St. John "he will observe my commandments and I shall come in him and establish my abode in him.[5]

In all intents and purposes the philosophy of mystical surrender implies the philosophy or doctrine of Grace, for He alone, as the Supreme Master, when appeased by man's complete surrender in mind, word and action, showers His Grace on the devotee and unites him for ever in His all enveloping embrace. If a man, contrary to the philosophy of absolute surrender to God's mercy, tries to justify his deed—done mentally, orally or physically

1. Nanak Vani, p 430. Rag Tilang M.1. Sabab.
2. Sri Bhagwad Gita, XVIII. 65.
3 The Glorious Koran. Quoted by Mahadevan Desai in his "Gita According to Mahatma Gandhi."
4. Quoted by Jacques De Marquette in his "Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p. 136.
5. St. John. XIV. Bible.

by the established practice of the worldly Law, then he will certainly fall away from God and render himself disqualified for being the recepient of the Grace of God. For, the law of the world is different from law of the Lord. The former tends to be torn asunder by scissors of stormy times, while the latter alone abides and is outside the ken or control of time. And so, in a sentence, which is the condemnation of the partisans of the worldly religion, the apostle adds in a paraphrase of the parable of Martha & Mary : "If you seek to be justified by the law, you are excluded from Christ, you are fallen away from Grace".[1] For it is the Spirit that vivifies; the flesh profiteth only when man makes God his final abode and the only shelter, He floods his life with Grace and enshrines Himself in his fragile figure of mortal flesh. Let us illustrate the point of absolute surrender by the following example of Saint Antoinette Bourignon. Writes William James :

"Throughout the annals of the saintly life we find this ever recurring note: fling yourself upon God's providence without making any reserve whatever,—take no thought for the morrow,-sell all you have and give it to the poor,—only when the sacrifice is ruthless and reckless will the higher safety really arrive. As a concrete example let me read a page from the biography of Antoiette Bourignon, a good woman, much persecuted in her day by both protestants and catholics, because she would not take her religion at second hand. When a young girl, in her father's–house,–she spent whole nights in prayer, oft repeating: Lord. what will thou have me to do? And being one night in a most profound penitence, she said from the bottom of her heart: 'O my Lord! what must I do to please thee? For I have no body to teach me. Speak to my soul and it will hear Thee. 'At that instant she heard, as if another had spoken within her: Forsake all earthly things. Separate thyself from the love of the creatures. Deny thyself.' She was quite astonished, and not understanding this language, she mused long on these three points, thinking how she could fulfill them. She thought She could not live without earthly things, nor without loving the creatures, nor without loving herself. Yet she said 'By thy Grace I will do it, Lord'. But when she would perform her promise, she knew not where to begin. Having thought on the religious life in monasteries, that they forsook all earthly things by being shut up in a cloister, and the love of themselves by subjecting of their wills, she asked leave of her father to enter into a cloister of the bare foot carmelities, but he

1. Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, by Jacques De Marquette., p. 139.

would not permit it, saying he would rather see her laid in her grave. This seemed to her a great cruelty for she thought to find in the cloister the true christians she had been seeking, but she found afterwards that he knew cloisters better than she: for after he had forbidden her, and told her he would never permit her to be a religious nun, nor give her any money to enter there, yet she went to Father Laurins, the Director, and offered to serve in the monastery, work hard for her bread, and be content with little, if he would receive her. At which he smiled and said: 'That cannot be. We must have money to build; we take no maids without money; you must find the way to get it, else there is no entry here.'

This astonished her greatly, and she was thereby undeceived as to the cloisters, resolving to forsake all company and live alone till it should please God to show her what she ought to do and whither to go She asked always earnestly, 'when shall I be perfectly thin, O my God?' And she thought He still answered her; 'when thou shall no longer possess any thing, and shalt die to thyself.' 'And where shall I do that Lord?' He answered her: 'In the desert.' This made so strong an imperssion on her soul that she aspired after this; but being a maid of eighteen years only, she was afraid of unlucky chances, and was never used to travel, and knew no way. She laid aside all these doubts and said, 'Lord, thou wilt guide me how and where it shall please Thee. It is for Thee that I do it. I will lay aside my habit of a maid, and will take that of a hermit that I may pass unknown.' Having then secretly made ready this habit, while her parents thought to have married her, her father having promised her to a rich french merchant, she prevented the time, and on Easter evening having cut her hair, put on the habit, and slept a little, she went out of her chamber about four in the morning, taking nothing but one penny to buy bread for that day. And it being said to her in the going out, 'where is thy faith? in a penny?', She threw it away, begging pardon of God for her fault, and saying, 'No, Lord, my faith is not in a penny, but in Thee alone.' Thus she went away wholly delivered from heavy burthen of the cares and good things of this world, and found her soul so satisfied that she no longer wished for anything upon earth, resting entirely upon God, with this only fear lest she should be discovered and be obliged to return home; for she felt already more content in this poverty than she had done for all her life in all the delights of the world.

The penny was a small financial safeguard but an effective spiritual obstacle. Not till it was thrown away could the character

settle into the new equilibrium completely."[1]

Reliance on God

The sum and substance of the illustration is that if man wants to liberate himself from the mortifying bondage of the body attachment to things and persons he must submit to His will and cast himself away. This attitude of absolute surrender alone is the cardinal virtue of spiritual discipline and constitutes the real service of the Lord Keeping this foremost in view Nanak, therefore, says that those who rely on God alone, and regard Him as the only refuge are saved from the wrath of Time or the scourge of Yama, the God of Death.[2]

In an exquisitely graphic and beautifully discriptive allegory Guru Nanak Deva points out 'how only those human beings who fix their hearts on the Centre of the cosmos are protected from being pounded to dust between the two grinders of the millstone of paradise and perdition. "When the corn is ripe", says Nanak, "it is sheared, only the straw remains within the fence And then the stalk is put to the thresher along with the thorns, and the grain is shaken off its body. And between the two millstones, the grain is ground; (But) lo, the wonder, that they who stick to the Millgate are saved."[3] This allegory is pregnant with high ethico-spiritual import and significance. Here the 'corn' is symbolic and human beings and the ripeness of the corn means the ripeness of the age of the humans; the two grinding millstone's signify two poles of birth and death which are no other than the heaven and hell in life; the mill-gate' is the doorway through which the corn are pushed into the mill for being pounded; those particles or corn which remain in the proximity of this door i.e., near the Centre or axil-peg 'God' round which the millstone of cosmic creation moves, are alone protected from being pounded to dust (death). True, indeed, as a child feels safe and secure in the presence or embrace of the mother, so does the devotee becomes completely carefree or fearless in his absolute reliance on Him. Nanak sings out: "Surrender thy self, so mayest thou meet thy Lord; No other wisdom can be of avail."[4] Surrender alone is the wisdom, all rest is ignorance. To surrender is to submit, to keep one's head at the feet of the Lord, to hear and obey His word. That

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1. The Varieties of Religions Experience, James William, pp. 321-323.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 184. Rag Magh. M.1. Sloke.
3. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 134, Vol. 1. Translated by Dr. Gopal Singh.
4. Message of Sikhism, p. 96. Tilang Rag Guru. 1. by Harbans Singh.

exactly is the essence of Sikh religion and philosophy; nay, of all the religions on the earth.

The True Sikh

The very term 'Sikh' which is a well known distortion of the Sanskrit word 'Sishya' implies in all strictness the rigorous discipline of a disciple. Total resignation to the will of the God-Guru is the heart of Sikhism. Thus the sense of surrender which is an offsnoot of the feeling of helplessness and frustration in life is one of the nobles incentives to the spiritual dedication of man. Feeling of surrender evolves out of the feeling of humility; the feeling of humility is born of man's helplessness against the stormy buffettings of fate; and fatalism of man is the logical derivative of the unpredictability and inevitability of the unfoldment of the Divine scroll. At the root of man's attitude of surrender thus lies his consciousness of the inscrutibility of the power which pervades in and around him and before whom the mightiest of the mighty kings have been laid to dust. Such an attitude thus raises a serious philosophic problem: whether or not man's belief in fate makes him pessimistic in his orientation and outlook on life?; whether or not is he reduced to the status of a mere passive, non doing instrument of God's sport?; whether or not the power and freedom of man is a total sham? Brushing aside these questions for their adequate analysis and critical exposition else where in their proper context, it is worthwhile just to emphasize at this stage that even pessimism counts as one of the compulsive incentives to man's spiritual life.

The Philosophical Incentives

The consciousness of sin, of old age and death, of illussion and sleep, of transmigration and metempsychosis, of utter helplessness in life's experience alone do not exhaust all the incentives to spiritual life The panorama of creaction is baffling. The overpowering consciousness of the wonder of the Creation in which we live also works as an abiding incentive to man's spiritual pursuit. The very hugeness and vastness of the universe, the vivid colourfulness and myrid richness of nature, the immeasurable expanse of the multi-plenary solar systems are all enough to imprint on human mind the finiteness of living creatures and the infiniteness of the power that has brought them into being. The path of man's spiritual life is in several cases laid by the acute and persisting sense of wonder[1] evoked by the gigantic panorama of the cosmic lap in which countless are craddled into the light of life and coammitted to the dark oblivion of Death very moment.

1. Nanak Vani, p. 635. Rag Maru Sohala. M.1.

So baffled is man's wit or ingenuity that it cuts a sorry figure in its effort to give adequate utterance to the great Wonder, that is, the Creator of the Cosmos. Of Him Nanak says: "कथना कथी न आवै तोटि। कथि कथि कथि कोटि कोटि कोटि"[1] i.e., to sing truly of the transcendant Lord would exhaust all vocabularies, all human powers of expression and yet He would remain an Untold Truth. Myriads have sung to Him in vain in innumerable strains. In other words, there is no end to His descriptions, though the speakers and their speeches be legion. In verse 19 of Japji, Nanak further tells us that 'His realm is beyond comprehension Foolish it is to try and count: Myriads are Thy manifestations'[2]. Even to say that "Countless are His manifestation" is to emburden the head with a load' (असंख कहहि सिरी भारु होई)[3] So overwhelmed is Nanak by the majesty of Creation and the might of the Creator that he sings out in humble praise :

> "How can an insignificant creature like
> myself express the vastness and wonder
> of thy creation? I am too petty to have
> anything to offer Thee; I can not, ever
> once, be a sacrifice into Thee. To abide
> by thy will, O Lord, is man's best
> offerings; Thou are Eternal, abiding in
> Thy Peace".[4]

This idea of the Eternal One, Ek Onkar, is the inalienable and integral offshoot of man's experience of the Infinite that permeates both the animate and the inanimate. It is the scholar-saints who had a similar mystical experience, have philosophized them and placed before the human world the standing query of what lies behind, beyond and beneath the visible world of wonders. The natural human inquisitiveness to enquire about and know the mysteriousness of the phenomenon of life and death and to unveil the secrets of Nature must have stimulated man to undertake, with all seriousness that accompanies the spiritual discipline, the inward journey of self-realisation. The large expanse of the unfathomable, open void, the starry heaven above and the deep blue girdling our world must have excited human mind to unravel the veil of mystery the source of all wonder. The illusive nature of the secretive nature and the invincibility of her power must have generated a sense of fear in man's bosom; and, the perfect orderliness in which Nature

1. Nanak Vani, p. 80. Japji
2. Ibid., 87. Japji. 19.
3. Ibid.,
4. The Sacred writing of the Sikhs, p. 39 by five writers

manifests herself i. e., her functioning in the form of regular and punctual rising and setting of the Sun, the incoming and outgoing of seasons with enviable regularity and exact intervals, the calculable solar and lunar eclipses, the exciting phenomenon of the tides and ebbs following the unalterable law of motion etc., must generate in human heart a sort of understanding that Nature is fearful of some Mysterious power whom it unflinchingly obeys in all strictness and with mathematical accuracy. "That One' alone is without fear, all else are fearful; and they alone are freed from fear who meditate on Him and seek His shelter.

In the most celebrated hymn 'भै विचि पवणु वहै दस वाउ'[1] Guru Nanak points out with remarkable candidness that all that is in the world whether animate or inaminate breeze, streams, fires, clouds, the Sun and the Moon, mortals and superman-abide in the fear of God. He concludes the hymn by declaring that 'the writ of fear is over the head of all (सगलिया भउ लिखिआ सिरि लेखु)[2]. Nanak: the fearess is the one Absolute, the True Lord alone (नानक निरभउ निरंकार सचु एकु)[3] So it is worthy of a human being, Nanak says some where else, "to entertain in the heart the fear of the Lord; through the fear of the Lord, all other fears are conquered (डरि घरू, घरि घरू, डरि डरु जाये)[4] Precisely speaking, since every thing in this physical world works with faultless regularity and punctuality only because of the fear of the Lord, God alone, says Nanak, is our last stay and our final help He who puts his trust in mortal things, will and can attain nothing but morality He who puts His trust in the immortal Ek will unfailingly attain to the bliss of immortality. It is thus clear that the philosophic speculation about the wide wide world also tends to serve as a powerful incentive to man's spiritual pursuit in life.

Besides the bewildering variety of the colourful panorama of Nature, the phenomenon of births and deaths also poses a challenge to the human passion to know, and in his effort to respond to this challenge man seeks the support of a spiritual discipline. Between what the Sikhs call 'Viyoga' Separation of Jiva from God as a result of forgetfullness i.e., विस्मृति and 'Sanyoga' (Jiva feeling of oneness with Lord, the Parabrahama) i.e. स्मृति the entire gamut of life swings forth. 'Viyoga' is bondage. 'Sanyoga' is liberation. This philosophic speculation proves to be of immense value as an incentive to man's

1. Nanak Vani, p. 328. Rag Asa M.1. Sloka.
2. I bid page No. 328.
3. Sacred Writings of the Sikhs Page No. 83 (five writer)
4. Nanak Vani Page No. 201 Rag Gaudi Gurari M.1. Chaupadal.

spiritual pursuit; for, in 'Sanyoga' is established the perfect union of light within with the Light that pervades every where and all over. That co-mingling of the 'Jiva' i.e., Light immanent and 'Shiva' i e., Light imminent is summed up, by Guru Nanak Deva as self knowledge or realization. He who has searched and examined and realized his own self is the really wise man, who knows the distinction between the 'unreal'[1] (खोटा) and the real[2] (खरा) and has himself transcended both the real and unreal and become what Nanak calls 'अपर अपरा' i.e , Indifferentiably One with the Beyond, the Endless one. In this respect Nanak's famous meditational poem 'खोटे कउ खरा कहै, खरे सार न जाणै'[3] is worthy of being fully quoted and examined.

"The blind of mind, O what may one say to them? Without the Guru, one seeth not the path; how is then one to get alone ? One calleth the false one true and the essence of Truth one knoweth not: wonderful is this age of Kali, wherein the blind one is the seer: Those in sleep are called awake; and those awake as if in sleep; And the living one is called Dead, (but) the (one truly) Dead is mourned not !

He, who cometh is seen as going, and he who goeth as coming: That what belongs to the other, one own as his own; and his own he liketh not a bit !

He calleth the Sweet bitter and bitter. the sweet: And Slandereth the one Imbued (with the Lord) : Such is the way of the Kaliage

He serveth the Maid, and seeeth not the Master (But) if one churns a puddle, it will not yield him butter. He, who knoweth the meaning of this verse is my Guru. Nanak: he who knoweth himself, he (mergeth in the infinite, goeth beyond the beyond."

The path of self-realisation

Nanak tells us that some hold the world as false and others hold it as true, but they know not the essence of the Truth. It is a wonderful pecularity of the Kaliyuga that those who are blind to Truth are called seers and those who have perceived and partaken of the Truth are condemned as the whimsical and the blind ones. This philosophic maze into which many have been strayed has inspired persons, though not many in number, to tread the path of self-realisation. Nanak points out that one has to know both the false and the true, the unreal and the Real, and transcend both and reach the highest asent of spiritual discipline which is attained

1. Nanak Vani Page No- 240 Rag Gaudi Baragani M.1.
2 Ibid.
3. Sri Sri Guru Granth Sahib Page No.220 Vol. 1. Translated by Dr. Gopal Singh

through incessant meditation on the Name with love, sincerity and devotion.

Curiously enough, it may be pointed out that since the very hoary days of the Vedic seers and sages, of Socrates, Aristotle and Plato, the knowledge of one's own self has been the summum bonum of all philosophy, eastern as well as western. The urge of man to encounter the metaphysical Reality has thus been one of the great incentives of his spiritual life. This is, however, true that not many men have been motivated by this incentive. It has been the blessed motive with only a few. Nanak, who had the privilege of divine self-knowledge, brushed aside all the other pursuits except that of the nectarian Nam-Smaran, and preached the doctrine of self-knowledge, the epitome of the truth of truths, as the experience of the Reality identical with as well as beyond the physical reality that comes to our gaze.

The Ethical Approach

Let us now pass on to the ethical approach or incentives to spiritual life. There in a deep seated urge is man to achieve betterment in life, and the luminaries of the spiritual world hold out before him the pathway of prayer to God[1] for improvement or betterment in life. The first ethical question of great spiritual import which Nanak raised is to give up the false pursuit and fake ways of life which, though intended to delude others, are no other than positive self-deception. Real betterment in life is not to be assessed on what people show or seem to be. It is the qualitative transformation of a human being which provides the touchstone. Not the outer manifestation or ostentation, but the inner worthiness or transfiguration of man alone is the sole criterion. Challenging the formal approach to religion or good conduct in social life Nanak addresses upon the Brahmin (Priest) 'to regard (1) God alone as the Shaligrama' and (II) 'Good deeds alone as the tulasimala' and 'erect the dam of Ram Nam,' otherwise he will be doomed (सालग्राम बिप पूजि मनावहु सुकृत तुलसी माला)'[2]. He ends this hymn by evoking the grace of God which alone is capable of transforming a crain into a swan (बगुले ते फुनि हसुला होवे जेतूँ करहि दइम्राला)[3]. Thus the need of personal betterment which is fulfillied by the Lord's grace, has the potential force to serve as an incentive to man's spiritual life.

1. Pathway to God in Kannad Literature Page 12. By Prof. R. D. Ranade.
1. Nanak Vani Page No. 706. Rag Basant M.I. Chaupadai·
2. Ibid.

Betterment in Personal Life

But this incentive of betterment in personal life is not as strong as is the need of betterment in social or collective life of a community. Of what ever aspect or expanse of social life a human eye can scan, the most obvious and easily discernible thing that will attract its attention is the incongruity between what man does and what man is. The liars spread falsehood and are happy whereas the true ones speak the Truth and suffer for it. The dishonest ones cheat others and are prosperous whereas the honest ones who are fair in their deals are miserable. The wicked ones gain an ascending status in life whereas the wise ones sink low in prestige and become victims of crucifying ridicule. The bad people go up and good ones go down. All looks incongruous and provokes a legitimate enquiry : Is virtue punishable and vice rewardable ? Before answering this question in the negative and before affirming that God alone is just and His justice is absolute, Guru Nanak gives us a very brief but meaningful pen portrait of the dark age, the kaliyuga. Those were the days when India was invaded by Babar, the Great Mughal King. Since he was himself a personal witness to the result of the invasion of Babar in 1526 and to the final and brutal destruction by his armies of the Lodhi dynasty, he could not but ask God whether or not He had felt the anguish of the fallen and the dead. He prayed:

"Thou, O creator lord, hast protect Khorasan: and Hindustan, Thou hast terrified. Thou takest not the blame on Thy self, and so, hast made the Mughal an angel of Death. Such intense is our suffering, O Lord, and thou feelest not compassion?[1]

No only did Nanak simply ask God this question but made a serious complaint that He was not coming to the succor of the helpless and the needy. Continuing his prayer he complains thus:

"O creator, Thou belongest to all; if power overpowereth power, I grieve not; But if a wild lion falleth upon a flock of sheep, then the master must answer."[2]

Nanak's Description of Evil

It was very natural for Nanak's human heart to grieve the slaughter of the week and helpless by the terrific and the powerful and ask the Herdsman to answer why he allowed a fierce tiger to pounce upon and make the helpless cattle its prety Guru Nanak was thus not at all happy on what followed the first battle of Panipat. He

1. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 351. Rag Asa M.1.
2. Ibid.

accused God of partisanship only in a way, of course,-and wanted Him to answer for the tyranny. His searching eye and the feeling heart could not rest content with what was going on all around. He remorsefully witnessed how goodness was pooh-poohed and badness boosted up, how virtue was dethroved and vice enthroved to rule, how selflessness was shrinking and selfishness reigning supreme. In one of the most celebrated meditational passages, Nanak gives awonderful and metaphorical description of the expanding empire of evil thus:

"There is a complete blackout of Truth (सचि कालु); falsehood is superme and current (कूड़ु वरतिया); the blackness of the age of Kali maketh men demon."[1] " Avarice is the king and sin the minister; and falsehood is their chief. And lust, yes, is the adviser and so they all configurate. Their subjects have gone blind in want of wisdom and, like the dead, they bribe and dance to their tunes."[2]

By implication, Nanak makes it more than clear that the moral tone and fibre of social and individual life of people had ebbed too low to evoke Good man's appreciation and posed a genuine query as to the correspondence between virtue and misery, between vice and glory. Why is it that the virtuous in life are the victims of frustration defeat, and suffering and the vicious are crowned with mirth, glory and success ? Is not this word of human affairs full of anarchy ? One is at once reminded of the most celebrated poem of Surdas. the Saint Poet of Hindi Literature; entitled (ऊधो धनि तुम्हरो व्यवहार) where in the Gopis make a sarcastic complaint against Lord Krishna's deceptive and uncomely deal They sing out a dig on the Lord by telling that He is patronizing the thieves, driving away the good and gentle ones, and relying upon those who whisper lies and make false complaints (चोर बसावत साहु भगावत, चुगलनि को एतबार)[3]. This behaviour of Lord Krishna is explicable, they argue, only as (अन्धा धुंध दरबार) i.e., chaotic rule. Here, it is with a different emotion that the Gopis betrary their helplessness to bear the pangs of separation from the Beloved, Lord Krishna. In the maditational saying of Guru Nanak also a similar undercurrent of emotion is flowing. He assigns mal-adjustment in society to the discrepancy of man between what he actually is and what he does show. In this disparity between man's speech and deed lies the crux of the whole moral problem.

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 340. Rag Asa M.1. Sloka.
2. I bid., p. 341. Rag Asa M.1. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 469. Translated by Dr. Gopal Singh.
3. Surdas Padavali.

The Discrepancy in the Moral World

Nanak says "Those who love to be called) wise (they) dance and make merry, blow beguils, assume several decorations. The educated fools know only logic and cunning, and remain engaged in the amassing of riches. The religious ones do perform good deeds but lose their effectivity by praying for liberation; others cherish to be called ascetics but they know not the requisites of being so, but they leave homes and go away. All (who are ignorant) regard themselves perfect; none regards himself as lesser (in importance)"[1]. Naturally, thus, from what goes here above the question persists: what accounts for this discrepancy between what one performs and professes to do? Why it is that the evil doers roll in luxury, as we see, and the virtuous are left only to lament and bemoan their lot? Nanak has only one answer to offer and that accounts for the want of correspondance between the good and misery, and between evil and luxury. It is because of man's forgetfulness of God crystallzed in the 'Karmic' theory that there is a seeming maladjustment in his social living.

Human birth has two aspects, in the first place, 'jiva' enters human form to suffer or enjoy the consequences of the evil or good done by it in the previous birth. Human life is, from this point of view, what saints call 'भोग योनि' Simultaneously, in the second place, human life is also, in the language of mystic "योग योनि", a very difficult to-get in life. In the human birth, a 'jiva' has the compulsion to have its share of sweet-bitter karmic fruits, on the one hand, and the option or freedom to choose the pathway of i.e. union with God, on the other Only two curses are thus open before man: of salvation and of suffering. Prayer & prostration at the feet of God constitute the pathway to salvation.

I-ness, born of pride of one's own power, youth and beauty leads one forcibly on the pathway to bondage and suffering. Thus, man who has fixed his heart on the lotus feet of the Lord Almighty leads a very holy life in this mortal existence, but he has to suffer the miseries in this very life because of the evil deeds of the past life. The encongruence of actual sufferings in the life of the virtuous and good men is thus convincingly explained. It is only because of the theory of Karma that the good ones are seen in a pitiable plight and the evil-doers and the perverts seem to enjoy power and position in life. The Wheel of Karma, can be broken and burnt only by keeping absolute reliance on the Indwelling Spirit, Ek Onkar.

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 341. Ran Asa M.1.

The realisation of the utter possibility of not only mitigating but completely destroying the evil impact of i.e. suffering by practising (योग) i.e. union with Parmatman is undoubtedly the most powerful of all ethical incentives to man's spiritual life.

Surrender to God is the Supreme Remedy :

Having discussed some of the most important and powerful incentives to man's spiritual life, it is necessary to analyse and understand the way Guru Nanak has laid down for human kind to transcend or over come the evils implied in these incentives ? Brief is life, and the world is a trap from which it is hard to escape. Nanak has well said that he who comes to world grieves, strives endlessly and goes discontented from the world, mostly, complainingly.[1]

After mixing with the dust, he has to painfully pass through the eithty four lakhs of wombs-yes, neither less nor more.[2]

The Net of Deception

And whatever and whomever he sees with his physical eyes either disappears or dies. He stands duped. For the net of deception is spread all over. Everywhere and at every stage one encounters the atmosphere horribly polluted by smile, malice and reveng ; by corruption, selfishness, perversity and what not One cannot but feel disgusted Nothing in the world seems permanently dependable. The snares of society and individual greed overawe man, virtually eat at the very vitals of his life, and mercilessly leave him helpless in the mire of suffocating wor'dliness. So much and with such an unbearable and baffling load of anguish on his heart he curses his lot and cries out in pain in Nanak's words thus: "whom am I to be friend? Whom to surrender my soul? whom to offer my heart and body ?"[3]

God's Devotion as the Way Out

"What is the way out ? evokes a soul searching effort. To our great help and good Nanak has categorically laid down that the "perverse of mind do not comprehend; they are separated from God and suffer."[4] He, therefore, warns and wants us to keep absolute trust in God. For, "there is but one gate, the Lord, through which, to escape the wrath of worldliness. There is no other sanctuary."[5]

1. Nanak Vani, p. 519. Rag Ram Kali Dakhani Onkar I.
2. Ibid
3. Ibid p. 523. Rag Ram Kali M. 1. Dakhani Onkar.
4. Hymn of Guru Nanak, p. 88-Kushwant Singh.
5. Ibid.

Nanak is very emphatic and clear on this point that "without God worthless is life".[1] As fire of Thirst is slaked by water, as mothers' milk is to her hungry babe, as the lake is to the lotus and the fish-without which they die so is nector of Hari's name given by the Guru.[2] Nanak says "May my life be spent singing the songs of the Lord."[3] For, he who drinks the nectar of Name shall find fulfilment; for the ceaseless Name-Chanting is the 'wage' to gain 'release' from the wheel of fated life and death[4] "Listen brother, says Nanak, "Neither thy body nor thy wealth will accompany Thee. The name of Rama is the real wealth."[5] He asks man to attach himself only to the incessant rememberance of the Real one, who gave him the body and mind and adorned it. To spend a single moment without God's rememberance is more than even losing a million coins. Man's forgetfulness of God is more piercing and painful even the thousand bites of scorpions For the name of Hari is without peer, matchless in majesty and the only pancea of the disease of worldliness. Only when, through the grace of Guru, the long fever of separation from God, the beloved, is over by constant and loving meditation on the Name, the escape from the prison of wombs is victoriously effected.[6] "When God will it, we shall be liberated, 'God alone can pardon us"[7], says Nanak. The fool alone believes that daughters, sons, and relations belong to him. He sees his wife and is pleased He knows not that he who brings joys also brings sorrow. The mind of such disbelievers wavers and wanders in the futile quest of wealth and outside resources "We waste ourselves", Nanak further points out "in looking all around while the Real Thing is within us. The perverse preoccupied within themselves donot see it. The saintly secure it in their aprons."[8]

Hari i.e., God is the Indwelling spirit which creates, sustains and suspends the creation. By a look within, with the purity of heart attained by loving and rhythemic repeatition of God's name round the clock, and through God's grace, Nanak says, a man can indubitably escape for ever drudgery of soul's passage from yoni to yoni. That's why the Name of Hari shines supreme in the heart of the Saint That's why Nanak hails Name as both the end and the means of all spiritual pursuit. Name as an end is God and, as, a means, is the

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1. Hymn of Guru Nanak, p. 91-Kushwant Singh.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. p. 90 - Kushwant Singh.
5. Ibid
6. The Bhagwat Gita, Chapter XVIII.
7. The Hymn of Guru Nanak, p 90 - Kushwant Singh.
8. Nanak Vani, p. 156. Sri Rag M. 1. Astpadi.

sovereign saviour. From him have we come and unto him shall we resolve. It is not only thus futile but fatal to think of any one other than Hari, the Lord. Nanak's following hymn is highly significant and relevant on the point He says "Thy Name, O Hari, is my support, preserve me as it pleases thee "[1] After thus completely surrendering to the will and Mercy of God, Nanak glorifies Him as the Justest of all and goals his soul to attach itself to the meditation of His name alone: "My soul: the will of the Master is just. Attach thyself to Him who made thy body and mind and adorned it." The absolute supremacy of God's name, in Nanak vision, becomes clear when he further says: "were I to weight my body, cut in to tiny pieces and burn in a sacrificial fire; were i to turn my body and soul into firewood, burn it every day; were I to light hundreds to thousands of sacrificial fires, they would not equal the Name of Hari" what a wonderful way Nanak has chosen to chisel his arguments in establishing the peerlessness of God's name The beauty and magnificance of his logic is further enhanced by the power packed and thrill throwing wordings of the following piece of the hymn in continuation; "were my head sawed in twain my torn in two, were my body frozen in Himalayan snows, it would not rid my mind of disease. No remady equals the Name of Hari,[2] this I have tested and found true "

In these words Nanak gives his final verdict on the matchlessness of Name on the solid bedrock of personal concrete experience. That man alone is fortunate and free in whose heart flows the music of Name-flute "Rare are they who know this: Through the Guru is made their mind wise. So forget not the Name, O Nanak, for thou art Delivered by practicising the word. Anyone who want to verify the truthfulness of Nanak's verdict may here from Guru the Word and practise it with a sense of deep humility, holiness of heart and loving devotion Meditation on God's Name means mingling of mind with God this mingling soul in 'jiva' from with the soul in the formless 'Shiva' is the patheay to freedom from the prison of wombs or 'samsar', Name is the valid passport to God-hood He is the escape.

1. Hymn of Guru Nanak, p, 89. Translated by Kushwant Singh.
2. Ibid.

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Moral Grounding For Mystical Life

Necessity of Translating Spiritual incentives in to ethical living

The incentives to spiritual life are not enough in themselves; they become meaningful only when God-aspiring souls begin imbibing values of good life in actual living The doors of spiritual life are certainly opened up by the incentives unleashed by fearful death, frustrating despondency, blinding illusion, heart breaking helplessness, consciousness of sin, and the current beliefs regarding metempsychosis and transmigration. but it is up to man himself to muster courage and enter the door. And the precondition of mustering up such courage is the gradual assimilation of virtues or righteousnees in life. For, though spiritual life includes and is the culmination of all ethical life. the moral grounding is the prerequisite of mystical life Man has to build moral strength in order to scale spiritual heights. God alone is the source and strength of all moral and spiritual life.

Great heights attained by the saints and mystics are enchanting but the steps that lead to them are perilous and often repulsive in most cases. This speaks aloud of the necessity of being virtuous and morally courageous to climb up the mystical hill of God realisation. This necessity of moral preparation for all those who want to dedicate their lives to spiritual pursuits is indeed great. but it merits realisation that all moral men are not necessarily spiritual in conduct and outlook. Good men without Godhood is a possibility, because goodness is more often than not assessed and adjudged on the touchstone of social ethics prevailing in the community of human beings at a particular period of time. Righteousness is a relative and not absolute virtue and its sole criterion is furnished by the Ideal cherished by the society. There is no dearth of morally high men even in the communist society, but that does not mean that they ar spiritually alive and up too A man of high moral life is not necessarily a man of great spiritual depth.[1]

No spirituality without morality, but all moral men are not necessarily spiritual.

True, there is no quid pro-quo between moral and spiritual advancement, but this is only one side of the picture. To Nanak,

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1. Nanak Vani - Jai Ram Misra, p. 140. Sri Rag M. 1. Ast.

and to all ranking saints, they alone are ethically high who have realised that they are the inseparable childern of the Infinite One in infinite forms. Their being moral depends on their being believers of God Only that morality which leads man to the desirability and urgency of God-realisation might, therefore, become in due course of time a ladder to spiritual life. Moral discipline must originate and fructify in spiritual life. Moral discipline must be perfected by spiritual discipline. No spiritual roots, no tree of moral fruits.

The question thus crops up: what sort of moral grounding or preparation is necessary for an aspirant to evolve into a spiritual entity? In order to arrive at its convincing reply, it is proper for us to proceed step by step thus: in the first place, let it be recognized that a life without morals is a life without purpose or ideal; that a life without ideal is a life without light or direction; that a life without direction is a life with a blind pursuit, full of chaos and actuated only by impulsive needs: and that a life at implusive level is an unregenerate life lived at a base and an uncultivated level. In the second place, it merits appreciation that moral life begins only when man learns to rise above petty selfishness to discipline all his activities after a pattern inspired by an ideal objectively accepted by the society in which he lives and to do only that which he declares to be good and ideal. For, morality consists in translating the ideal into real, in narrowing down to nullity the distance between what is said and done, in doing good rather than in mere talking about it. There can be no religious life without morality and no moral life without religion. Speaking about 'On Being A Christian'. says Daniel Williams: "No man without morality can be a Christian, but all moral men are not Christians."

Evidently it is necessary for a truly religious fellow to be moral, though all moral fellows are not always religious. It is so primarily because the true sanction behind moral life is social, whereas that behind religious life is spiritual. That is why mere social service actuated on humanitarian grounds in. not at all a spiritual pursuit. Man without God may be good, but God's men are good and must necessarily be so. For, is not spiritual life without morality an empty phrase like a rootless tree? Moral preparation is thus an act of equipping one's ownself for a truly spiritual discipline. There can be no mystical life without a thorough moral grounding, though one should not stop at moral life only.

The Central Wheel of Moral Life or Grounding :

God is the central wheel of moral life. All visions and works,

emotions and activities, dreams and deeds which lead to God-realisation, or are inspired by trust in God alone are conducive to man's moral grounding for his spiritual pursuit of Self-Realization. All such ideas and activities, plans and programmes, beliefs and practices which take man away from the Almighty are the biggest hurdles in his work of the requisite moral grounding for God-realisation. It is, therefore, better for an aspirant to entertain only such thoughts and perform such deeds as help him in his spiritual pursuits and outright reject all such speculation and works which carry him farther away from the parent source of all moral values, the Truth, which is the formless substance of God. This point is very lucidly explained by Guru Nanak in second verse (Chhand) of Dhansari Rag wherein he says;

" एक साहिब दुई राह वाद वधिया जीउ "[1]

Addressing Hari, the Lord, Nanak says that "Thou alone art...the Creator in a subtle invisible way," and addressing mankind as a whole he says that 'God is one, but the pathways are two: one leads to Hari and the other to Maya' i e., worldliness, which binds 'jiva' to the wheel of births, of struggle, of servitude. Nanak recommends the Noble Path, for it will help man realise his own self and fulfil the essential mission of life—the communion with the Holy.

Two Ways of Life:
The Frog Way and the Lotus Way

Commenting upon the above cited verse, Dr. Jayaram Misra in his Nanak Vani speaks of these two ways as the ways of 'Sreyas' or Parmatma ka Marg and 'Preyas' or Maya ka Marg. Undoubtedly he has in his mind the Upanishadic concepts of 'Sreyas' and 'Preyas' which are the perennial source of all moral and immoral life respectively.[2] It is the innate tendency of man to go in for what is dear (प्रिय) to him, for the achievement of that gives him a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction. Man does not, at that time, take into account the other aspect of his pursuit that the non-achievement of the dear objects of his pursuit will give him pain and dissatisfaction. The 'preyas' is thus the pathway of human pleasure and pain. But the pathway of 'Sreyas' is, on the contrary, a pathway of divine bliss in the midst of hum-drum of human existence, of eternal peace in the midst of daily struggle and suffering. On this path man moves and lives on a higher plane of spiritual existence where the happiness of one and all, under God's majestic and merciful auspices, is the ruling objective. There, man

1. Nanak Vani-Jayaram Misra, p. 422, Rag Dhansari M.1.
2. Ibid., p. 423.

works for an ideal of common weal wherein his personal welfare is both included and subordinated in the name of God. As the ideal of 'preyas' is for personal pleasure and satisfaction, so the ideal of 'Sreyas' is for universal peace and good. Life dedicated to the fulfil ment of the former ideal makes man self-centred and in the pursuit of his life he strives to gain personal pleasure and weal at the cost of peace and progress of the other ones, whereas the life dedicated to the latter ideal is self-controlled and in the pursuit of his life he sincerely strives for the common good and happiness on the larger canvas of co-operative or corporate existence in which his own good and satisfaction are implicit. The 'preyas marg' is an offshoot of materialistic philosophy whereas the 'sreyas marg' is that of the spiritual one. These two ways of life, in Nanak's divine utterances, are called the 'Way of the Frog' and the 'Way of the Lotus' respectively. The Frog Way makes man Maya-bound and is born of pro-'I'-attitude (हउमै or मन्मुख), The Lotus Way makes man God-bound is born of (गुरू मुखता) pro - Guru attitude. The genesis of both are Ego and Grace respectively; and the nemesis of both is soul's march from yoni to yoni and soul's merging into God for ever respectively. Nanak urges man to follow the Lotus Way, which is the fountain-source of all virtues or morality.

NANAK'S DESCRIPTION OF THE LOTUS WAY AND THE FROG WAY

In his meditational hymn Nanak gives in an exquisitely poetic way a sober comparision of the two cardinal ways or tendencies that prevail in the world of human beings. Addressing the frog, Nanak says :

> "There billows the clean water in
> the holy (pond): there dwell both
> the Lotus and-the Grass, but
> the lotus, though surrounded, is
> free from the contamination of
> both·

Verse 1

> "O, Frog! you will never under-
> stand this (non-contaminatibility
> of Lotus), you too live in the
> same pound, but do not see the
> nectar and eat only the grass
> (Sibalu).

Verse 2

"O Frog, you are the permanent
dweller of (the holy waters of)
the pond and the black bees do not
live there. Yet they hum out only
the qualities of the lotus. Even
when the कुमुदनि and the moon live
at a great distance, the former
as a result of the (imbued with
its love) experience of proximity,
springs out in glee.

Verse 3

"You should be wise (atleast now)
and gather drops of ambrosia, milk
and honey You will never give up
your habit, like the habitual
complainer, even when loved.
"Many unwise live with the men of
wisdom and hear of the Vedas and
the ancient lore divine (But) you
will never give up your habit,
like the dog's tail.

Verse 4

"Some hypocrites there are who love
not the Name; others there are who
lovingly revert to Hari's feet
Nanak: you will get what is pre-
ordained; O, tongue! sing the Name.

Verse 5/[1]

In this allegorical hymn Nanak talks distinctly of human beings following two different ways: those who follow the lotus way and those who follow the frog way Their ways are characteristically different from each other The feature of paramount importance in the Lotus Way is that men remain free from the contamination of their association because (a) they are wise, (b) they know the Truth, (c) they live in and by the Truth, (d) they have renounced their habitual attachment with the world of senses in favour of the Nectar Name, (e) they experience the proximity of the Lord and are pure of heart, (f) the distance between the self within (jiva) and self all pervading Shna has been gradually bridged by constant chanting of God's name. Precisely, the Lotus Way of wisdom consists in giving

1. Nanak Vani, Jai Ram Misra, p. 576. Rag Maru M 1. Chaupadae.

up the 'doshas' i.e., viees and sipping up only the 'amritu khandu' i e., ambrosial juice of God's name. This way gives us practical lessons in the divine science of living in the world of senses without in the least being contaminated by its constant association. The lotus way is thus a way of 'sar-grahana'[1] and 'asar-tyaga' i.e., of assimilating the essential and assailing the non-essential by God's rememberance; also of picking up the virtues and purging out the vices. In a word, the Lotus Way is the way of Godliness, the perennial parent source of all morals and virtues.

The Forg Way is just the opposite of the Lotus Way, and its followers are the damned creatures of stark worldliness. They donot give up the world of senses and are so over-powered by the ephemeral delights of sensual purusits that they refuse to even taste the fruit of wisdom offered to them by the company of the good and by the study and 'sravana' of the theological texts. They are the victims of gross sensualism and even when they remain in the company of the wise and listen to vedic and other divine words of wisdom spoken out to them, they l ke the crooked tail of dog, love to lead only the crooked and the vile way of the world. They pick up only the evils of association and permit no entry in their life to virtues that are hard to cultivate Nanak admonishes the frog-way fellows and addressess upon them this hymnic message of the desirability of giving up the mockery of gross worldliness and of growing into the divine wisdom bv using the tongue for repeating God's name with devotion, trust and sincerity In a word, the frog-way is the way of ungodliness, the principal and ever flowing fount of all evils, sins or demonaic qualities

Reverting to our earlier proposition, since God is the central wheel of moral grounding let us conclude that all those who stick to this wheel with steadfast devotion will acquire the power and stamina to climb up the mystical hill of God-realisation and attain to the supreme status (परमपद of Godliness, while all those who separate themselves away from it will sink deep into the sea of sensuality and attain to the weal and woes of worldliness only. For, godliness is the ladder up to divinity and ungodliness is the ladder down to demonity; both individual as well as collective.

The Lotus Wayfarers

The persons who climb up the ladder of divinity are, says Nanak, the Lotus Way farers. They lead a life of virtuousity or

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1. Nanak Vanii, Jai Ram Misra, p. 458. Rag Suhi M.1. Chhand.

righteousness, a life of holiness They are inspired by the Word of the Guru who speaks unto them from the spiritual depths within. By paying sincere allegiance to the Word, the lotus-wayfarer develops a distinctive discretion wherewith he can separate the chaff from the wheat, the pearly truth from the ugly falsehood and, like a swan, he drinks only the 'milk' of ambrosial Name by discarding with unoffending humility the 'water' of worldliness. Nanak sings out; "If thou come across the caskets of perfume (i e., the Saints) in the form of virtues, then thou should get perfume from them. If thou get at the virtues of the holy men, then thou must share those virtues with them in actual living Having thus shared the virtues thou should live in the world and shun the vices and give up them soon."[1] It is wonderful that Kabir, the mystic-poet of Hindi Literature, gives a powerful utterance to the same thought thus: "कबीरा सगत साधु की, श्रो गंधी की बास । जो कछु गंत्री दे नही, तो भी बास सुबास". Kabir says: the company of the Saints is more effective than the association of a 'gandhi', the perfume-seller For even when the gandhi gives nothing to those in his proximity, they are blessed with the fragrance simply by his pres nce. Put differently, if there are persons who can get some perfume from the gandhi, they will be constantly in the personal possession of the refreshing fragrance. The lotus wayfarers are the men who would draw incessantly from the caskets of perfume i.e , virtues and make their lives living embodiments of goodness or righteousness in action. In a word, the first endeavour of the lotus wayfarers or the 'gurumukhi' is to distinguish between the good and evil, the real and unreal, the eternal essence and ephemeral existence, and then to imbibe and embrace the Real and the Good and to burn and banish or brush out the unreal and the Evil from actual life on personal and social planes.

Let us now try to understand and examine the ethical norms of lotus way farer on these two planes, individual as well as collective.

Human Life is a Golden Opportunity for the Achievement of the Ultimate Goal

All norms of personal and social ethics are derivable from the basic mataphysical postulate of Sikhism that man is essentially an 'image of God',[2] and that "human life is a golden opportunity and if it is not devoted to meditation, it is simply wasted"[3] As such it is the sacred duty of man to devote every moment of his life to meditation on the Divine Name. Since it is not possible, in the initi-

1. Nanak Vani, p 458, Rag Suhi M. 1 Chant.
2. The Quintessence of Sikhism-Gobind Singh, p. 114.
3. Ibid., p. 115.

al or intermediary stage, for each and every human being to employ all his waking hours to the service of God by way of loving repetition of His Name, it is considered right to practise virtues of pure water and ray serene. This bring us nearer to the question: what are vices and virtues? Virtue means and implies the ability to do good, good in loving obedience to the commandments of the Guru. Man is an inalienable member of society and his practice of virtue has the tendency to bear its impact on the lives of other members of the community of which he is an integral part. Thus understood the practice of individual virtues is a social responsibility. Different religions recommend different virtues. The famous Ten commandments are the soul of Christian ethics, both personal and social. The Bhagwadgita gives a detailed discription of the Divine Heritage (दैवी सम्पदा and Demoniac Heritage आसुरो सम्पदा) of man's mind; and Lord Krishna, the Teacher, asks his disciple Arjuna to follow the former and renounce the latter. What is most important in all these divine commandments or qualities is the orientation of man's mind (मन) This 'mana' of man is so constituted that it can not but be, other things being equal, avaricious and unwise and fickle. Nanak tells us :

> "इहु मन करमा इहु मन धरमा । इहु मन पंच
> ततु से जनमा । साकत लोभी इहु मन मूढा"
>
> :3:8.[1]

that is this 'mana' is (i) the doer, (ii) the duty, (iii) born of five element, and (iv) greedy and foolish. One has to pursuade his 'mana' to follow a particular discipline or a code of conduct. It is this 'mana' which inspires man to follow either the lotus way or the frog way

It is so because, according to Sikh psychology, 'mana' has two faces: the luminous (ज्योतिमंय) face whose voice if man hears and follows will make him Gurumukhi or the lotus wayfarer; and the ignoramus (तमोमय) face whose voice if man hears and follows will make him 'manmukhi' or the frog wayfarer. By responding to the subtle and secret call of the former 'mana', man becomes capable of recollecting his link with the eternal Ek Onkar, of remembering Him through the thick and thin of worldly life, of returning to Him for ever to mingle with Him never to be separated from His embrace. God alone is the Guru, the Indwelling Spirit, and all those who become pro-Guru (Gurumukhi) tear down the veil of

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1. Sri Guru Granth Sahib - translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, p. 415. Asa Rag, Asth apadis M. 1.

maya and reach Him without fail[1] But by responding to gross and naked call of the latter 'mana', man becomes able only to satisfy his baser self, to buttress the power of Ego (Haume), and to barter the perishable good and pleasure for the everlasting grace and bliss.[2] This outgoing or extrovert 'mana' i e., (Manmukhi) is extraordinarily fickle and remains immersed in maya, in the pleasurable pursuits of senses only. "Neither does the mana die, nor does die this maya" says Guru Nanak.[3] Only by overpowering this 'mana' Nanak further says, "you will never again suffer pain".[4] But the question arises; how can one conquer or consume this 'mana' ? The question is very significant because the conquest of 'mana' is the first step in the task of man's moral grounding for mystical journey. Nanak gives a very satisfactory and practical answer when he gives out, on the basis of his own experience, that the 'mana' is fundamentally filled with the all-filling-Bliss. It does not swagger. Mind has been and can be persuaded only by the mind[5] Only when the gross mind (Manmukh) is subordinated or overtaken by the subtle mind (Guru mukh), the most needed first stupendous step is said to have been taken by the aspirant on the path of his spiritual journey. But the query persists; what is the process whereby the subtle mind can take control of the gross mind ? Guru Nanak Deva has suggested certain ways, which he himself practised and the efficacy whereof was further empirically verified by all the succeeding Gurus, which if we follow with understanding, faith and devotion, we can certainly equip ourselves with the unassuming mastery over our gross mind in order to be truly moral in thought, conduct, and speech for our spiritual pursuit Guru Nanak in Japji Says: "To conquer the mana is to conquer the world"[6] The process of mind's conquest (मनोमारण), says Nanak, is mainly the process of changing one's attitude towards life and the world Again and again in his songs he speaks of only changing our attitude to the world and not to shun it. The mana acts as the mana itself dictates. Sometimes it expresses virtue, sometimes sin[7] It is only the attitude which can be changed. The mind (mana) alone is the changer. So mind must dictate mind to express itself only in virtue. This then is the first step without which mind gets defiled. To turn one's back on

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1. Guru Granth Darshan, Jai Ram Misra, p. 188, Sri Rag M.1.
2. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 415, Rag Asa M.1. Translated by Gopal Singh.
3. Ibid, p 1342. Prabhati M 1-G G.D,-Jai Ram Misra, p. 149.
4. Ibid. p. 21 Sri Rag M.1 Translated by Dr Gopal Singh.
5. Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1133, Rag Sarang M.1.
6. Nanak Vani, p. 93 Japji 28-3rd line.
7. Adi Guru Granth Sahib, p. 832. Rag Bilavalu Astpadis M.1. The Sacred Writings of the Sikh, p. 179.

God is to turn ones eyes to Maya; and that is the defilement of mind, says Nanak :

"One is defiled not by hearing the music or
by uttering the Vedas
Nor by the changing of the seasons
through the movement of the sun or the moon,
Nor through good, nor through baths, nor
if it raineth all over.
O, one is defiled not by the earth or the waters;
Nor if the earth mergeth in the winds.
Sayeth Nanak : It is by turning one's back
on God that one is defiled;
For, he, who is without the Guru, is shorn
of all merit."

So only when the outgoing gross mind is turned toward the inseated subtle mind which is no other than the spark of Light Divine, one can set for oneself the path of conquering or subduing the gross by the subtle mind. It is this indwelling 'spiritual psyche' which lies hidden in the deepest recesses of the gross human mind; it speaks from within on crucial moments simply to show, like the caution bell, the onset of a wrong course ahead Guru Nanak says that one should tirelessely try to listen to this voice of Wisdom coming, like a telephonic call, from the spiritual speaker within. Since ' the body is the temple of God within which He has locked infinite light",[1] it is the solemn obligation of all of us to see that light which is both within and without the body and hear the call The call-giver is the Guru, says Nanak. This very Guru is the God of Nanak, the formless Light, the Voiceless Word Niranjan, Nirakar, William Penn says; "There is something nearer to us then scriptures, to wit, the Word in the heart from which all scriptures come."

In Japji. Nanak Says: 'Gurumukh nadam, Gurumukh Vedam'; the Word of Guru is the music which the seers hear in their moments of ecstasy; this Word is the highest scripture, only by hearing this Word we can achieve the much needed conquest of mind for our spiritual journey. Says Nanak: when one seeth God within and without. the (inner) fire is quenched."[2] This is the second step in subduing mind by mind. And when this second step is successfully and firmly taken, the same process must simultaneously

1. Nanak Vani, 563. Rag Ramkali ki Var M. 1. Paudi.
2. Guru Nanak - Re interpreted by Naran Singh, p. 357.

be re-inforced by constant and loving rememberance of the Nectar Name. Precisely, the change of man's attitude from worldward to Wordward, the hearing of the Word, with love and devotion, and the deep meditation on the Name encompass the process leading to the conquest or control of mind which is the backbone of moral grounding for mystical life in the true sense of the term.

Cultivation of Virtues :

Moral preparation in the light of the Divine, with the progressive conquest of mind and self-control proceeding side by side, becomes ever broad and deep by setting a selfless orientation capable of greater insight and activism. And devotion to God becomes the supreme path leading to the revelation of the unity of all life. Since God is the Supreme Truth and the entire creation is the manifestation of His Will, love of Truth, feeling of fellowship with the animate and the inanimate, and a life of harmony with the Divine Will constitute the hard core of all the moral virtues which the aspirant should imbibe and assimilate. In other words, man's moral preparation must begin with a dedicated love of Truth and steadily grow with the imbibing of other essential fellow virtues of faith (विश्वास), contenment (संतोष), self-restraint (संयम), patience (धैर्य), goodwill for one and all (सद्भाव), self-surrender (आत्म समर्पण), and humility (विनम्रता) etc. It is wonderful that Nanak's life was a splendid proof and a glorious embodiment of all these virtues. He was not at all talking mere scriptural sermons; he was a living sermon in human form. That the life of Nanak was a walking encylopaedia of virtues is enough to convince any one of the practicability of these virtues. Let us now analyse them one by one.

Love of Truth and Truthful Living :

First of all comes man's love of Truth and truthful living. Truth is the name of God. Says Nanak· Ek Onkar Satnam'.[1] It is not an abstraction, but an actuality; both beginning and end of all virtues, itself beginningless and endless. Since Truth is the fount of the entire world of morals, all virtues hover round the man possessed by the love of Truth. It is the very basis of spiritual evolution, the essence and epilogue of it too.

What is truth ? one may enquire with anxiety. It is difficult to define Truth and yet we all revere it and think we know what it means. Never in the history of mankind Truth was ever chellanged, or controverted, though never there was a complete consensus on

1. Nanak Vani, p. 79. Japji Sahib.

what truth meant or implied. Right from the most ancient days, the thinkers in India, China and Greece have been earnestly seeking the Truth, and the entire gamut of human thought and ingenuity has been woven round and by the thread of Truth. Suffice to say in the present context, for it is no use treading the ground we have already trodden, that the Truth has been the initial and the most inspiring guide-line and the goal of all disciplines of knowledge and enquiry with which man is familiar today. That is why it has been the ambrosial juice by which Man has been quenching his thirst for knowledge since ages past. All the pursuits of his head and heart have hitherto been motivated by his inner urge to know the nature of Truth both inside and outside him, and then utilize the fruits of his discovery for the betterment of personal and social life. For whatever is, is not fully satisfying. And all people, in their own way, are seeking to achieve a better way of life, to rise above certain conditions in order to bring about a change. This is the meaning of man's work, to create through effort a new and different situation with some sort of orientation which leads to a positive improvement or change for betterment. When Truth is accepted as the only ideal, all activities get necessarily motivated by an urge to be better and perfect, for Truth is perfection and to be truthful is to be perfect. Love of Truth means love of perfection and God alone is Perfect. Guru Nanak says: 'He alone is true in the form of Truth'[1] i.e., 'He Himself is the Sun and Moon, He is Perfect in Himself.'[2] Therefore, since Truth is God and God is Truth and Perfect, it is the paramount virtue of an aspirant to seek God and act to achieve perfection in all his activities. Journey towards Truth is a journey of man's inner life towards Perfection, towards one's own Indwelling Spirit, towards God in brief. And the fare one has to pay for this journey is moral life ever refreshed, sanctified and strengthened by meditation on God's name.

Truth is the Alpha and Omega of Moral Life

In this journey of Truth which is the highest testament of spirituality, the alpha and omega of all virtuous life, the passenger must be curteous and respectful and loveful towards his fellow passengers in the train. One who loves truth should regard all those who seek the truth (Sadhak), who are Truthful (सच्चे) and who have realised the Truth (Siddha). One should thus seek the company of the holy persons in pleasing cheerfulness. Even the sacred books

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1. Nanak Vani - Jai Ram Misra, p. 606. Rag Maru Sohala M. 1.
2. Ibid.

in which Truth lies treasured should be regarded high, because they are the off-springs of divine utterances. This one can do only when one acquires the basic or fundamental virtue of hearing the Word which springs forth from the self within. Respectful hearing of the Word is the expression of One's love for the Truth and this naturally implies and manifests itself in the form of one's love and regard for the seekers, the truthful, and the 'siddhas'. All these aspects of journey unto Truth are interwoven and are called in the mystical terminology of Nanak and all other Saints 'Sat Sang', the company of the Truth

Company of the Saints

The purest and the best 'Sat Sang' is to closely attach one's mind to the rememberance of the name of God (Sat). Next to this sort comes one's association with one's Guru or with the Saints, for they are God or Truth in human form Then comes the company of the aspirants and the singing bards of God. For in all these forms of 'Sat Sang' God alone is the central principle. The Sat Sang is necessary for man's moral equipment for the principal reason that it keeps man away from that which is not true, from that which is false. Not only that, it leaves on human mind an inspiring and a light giving impact which ultimately helps in altering his attitude towards life and the world around him. The things of the world and relations in social life remain the same, but the outlook of man undergoes an essential change. As a result of which man realises the futility of worldly things and social ties, on the one hand, and grasps with firm belief the need and significance of sacrificing every thing and every one dear to him at the altar of Truth, if necessity arises on the other. For the Sat Sang makes him aware that Truth alone is supreme and worthy of man's realisation and that every thing or person that comes as a hurdle in his way of realising the Truth should be atonce discarded or renounced.[1] This spirit of faith in Truth alone and of renunciation of earthly things etc., generated as a result of the impact of 'Sat Sang', is the central core of all moral preparation for man's spiritual pursuit. Besides the the virtue of renunciation (त्याग) there develops in the heart of the aspirant a feeling of unity of life, because it is permeated by Truth. This feeling of fellowship with one and all, with Truth as the supreme object of devotion, enlightens him to renounce even the feeling of my-ness, thy-ness or his-ness and to rise much high above in attituditional

1. Sri Guru Granth Sahib. p 156 Rag Gaudi Chati M.1. Guru Granth Darshana-Jai Ram Misra, p. 305.

level where from he can experience that he has no friends and no foes. All are his and he is of all; every thing belongs to him and he belongs to everybody. For he begins to consider that 'the calculation that this belongs to me and that belongs to others is the calculation of the low mind: to those who are liberal or large hearted; the entire earth is a family unit[1] In a very celebrated poem Guru Nanak points out the extreme value of the company of the men of truth or the Saints. The chief effect of their company, says Nanak, is that "it enables one to forget the difference between the self and the not selfethically (बिसर गई सब आप पराई) and, therefore, metaphysically.[2]

Effects of Saint's company

No one is his enemy and no one is his friend in the eyes of such an aspirant. He belongs to the city of the world, and, for the matter of that, the city of the spiritual world. Prof. R.D. Ranade says: while discussing Nanak's view of effects of the company of the Saints on the progress of aspirant : "He would not be satisfied, with a mere cosmopolis, but must be a member of the Theopolis". Another effect of the company of the Saints on the aspirants' mind is the inculcation of an attitude of reconciliation. He begins to reconcile every happening in his life as the dictate of God: and, hence, he is enabled to make his will subservient to God's will. This spirit of reconciling every good or bad happening in one's personal and social life as the unfoldment of the divine injunction or justice, paves the pathway of peace and contentment in man's life about which we shall speak in detail only in its proper context. Renunciation and reconciliation implying extinction of dualism by annihilation of the emotion of I-ness (बिसर गई आप) and evolution of the faith in the unity of life by annihilating the attitude of distinguishing dualism are thus the two principal effects which the Sat Sang creates on the mind of the aspirant.

Be of World but not Worldly

The corner-stone of man's love of Truth thus is, says Nanak, "Be of the world but not worldly". When questioned how man could free himself from worldly attachments, he said :

> The lotus in the water is not wet, Nor the
> water foul in the stream If a man would
> live, but by the world untouched,

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1. अय निज: परोवेति गणना लघु चेतसाम् । उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्" ॥
2. Path way to God in Hindi Literature by Prof. R. D. Ranade, p. 57.

> Meditate and repeat the name of the
> Lord Supreme.[1]

Nanak no doubt abandoned his family when he first set out on his spiritual quest and often left it when he was away on his travels, but he always came back to it. He, like the mystic monarch Janak, lived the life of an ideal householder and preached, by personal example, that man can live in the world without being worldly. The contamination of worldliness while living in the world can be prevented or purged only by the active love of truth which means Satsang as decsribed above.

A life of detachment is strongly recommended (घर ह्ही माह्ही उदासा). Man can live in the midst of the din and bustle of his domestic world and yet not allow himself to be enmeshed in such a way that precludes God, the Truth. Nanak tells us that the act of being in the company of the holy and the good is the surest and safest way of keeping oneself detached and away from the things and persons that cause attachment. His message is; 'Live detached in midst of attachment; you will attain the way to yoga'.[2] Nanak's way to live the essence of the message is through the annihilation of one's ego, through surrender at the feet of the Holy, the Truth of all truth. He says : "Die to thyself while yet alive."[3] And there can be no purging of man's ego without man's loveful devotion to Truth by way of ceaseless meditation of the Lord and chanting of His Name with sincerity and selfless dedication. The company of the holy and the good is more than a pilgrimage to the places where God is enshrined in statutes locked in guarded temples. Only those places, temples or no temples, where Truth is loved and lived in reality, are holy; only those people who love truth and live truthfully are holy. Company of such people and visits to such places and study of holy books are capable, Nanak says, of transforming the victimes of attachments and worldliness into living models of detachment and divinity. For, truth with which such holy men and spots are charged, is the sovereign cure of all ills, the only remedy of the sickness of man's soul, the sure washer of all the sins and the remover of all stains. That is why Nanak even at the age of nine, is said to have asked his teacher, who wanted him to learn Hindi, to learn the spiritual science of distinguishing Truth from falsehood in the following immortal words :

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1. Nanak Vani, Ram Kali M 1. Sidh Gosthi, p. 539.
2. Nanak Vani, Rag Suhi M. 1., p. 441.
3. Ibid.

"O, you, the writer in the form of conscience
Burn attachment, powder it down and prepare
ink out of it; write out then with the pen in
the form of love lotus what is truth and non-
truth on the paper of intelligence."[1]

To Nanak, there is nothing higher than Truth for man to know and live by.

Love of Truth is thus the fundamental and foremost of all virtues with which man should build his moral strength for undertaking his spiritual journey into Godhead.

'Truth is higher than all', says Nanak 'but higher still is the life lived in Truth'.[2] For Truth, which is the most ennobling of all ideals and the most subtle of all abstractions, becomes real only when it is actually lived in all concreteness The virtues are the concrete of the substance truth. Truth is certainly on the tongues of many, but in the hearts of few. The disparity between the utterance and the activity pushes truth into oblivion and plants falsehood on its tomb. Till man acts truthfully his love of Truth is a hypocrisy. To pay only oral homage to truth without making life itself truthful is no less worse than preaching the gospel of peace while making clandistine preparation for a thorough war. Truth is not to be a mere spark on the tongue only, it is to be the light of the heart and the nectar of life. Nanak points out that Truth speaks through the dumb tongue of man's conscience, but very few men in the world hear it, and fewer still follow it. The Act of refusing to hear it and follow it is the root of all evils; from it follow all the vices and 'satanic' influences which weaken the moral fibre of man and render him ethically a wreck in due course of time. Contrary to it, if a man becomes careful and gives his ear to the Word which gushes forth from within and acts accordingly, he is freed from the prison Ego, the progenitor of all evils. All the vices are obliged to leave him one by one and go away making room for the virtues to dance in the light of his truthful living.

Truthful living, according to Nanak, thus means and implies two main things: hearing the Word and acting accordingly.[3] All art and literature, all science and philosophy, all knowledge of time and space evolve out of the Word. It is thus the solemn obligation of Man to first hear the World and then follow the Word. That is the essence of truthful living.

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1. Nanek Vani, p. 105. Sri Rag M.1. Sabad.
2. (i) Nanak Vani, p. 155. Sri Rag M.1. Astpadi.
   (ii) Sacred writings of the Sikh, p. 75,
3. Nanak Vani, p. 138, Sri Rag M.1. Astpadi.

That is the meaning of Nanak's message and advice given to his contemporary Nawab Daulat Khan of Sultanpur on the occasion of prayer (नमाज) at the mosque. Along with others there were in the Namaz the Qazi, the Nawab, and Nanak Deva himself. While the prayers were being offered, Guru Nanak was giving a self-sought smile. When the prayer time was over, the Nawab asked Nanak to explain his conduet to which he made a quick reply. "In the Court of the Lord the prayers of none of you two is going to be accepted, for the mind of neither of you was in prayer. The Qazi was mindful of 'whether or not the newly born calf of his cow might fall into the well'. You too were thinking 'how to accomplish the transaction of good horses in Kabul." On hearing it, both the Qazi and Nawab blushed and lowered their heads in shame The Nawab, however, requested Nanak to dilate on the true nature of Religion whereupon Nanak said:

> "Let mercy and truth be thy mosque,
> faith and sincerity thy prayer-mat (आसन),
> love of justice and honest living thy
> Koran, and gentlemanliness thy fast. Thus
> do thou become a true muslim. If pious
> deeds be thy Kaba, Truth be thy teacher,
> truthfulness in mind and deed be His will
> for thee to workout, He will keep thy
> honour.'[1]

Briefly, therefore, Truth is God and Truthful living is the true Religion. Those who follow this religion are getting nearer and nearer to God, to finally merge in Him. Such ones alone are held high in esteem in the court of God (Saci dargah baisai bhagati saci ardas),[2] says Nanak. They go high up in God's eyes and His graceful eye opening on them washes their sins away and makes them pure of mind and sublime of heart.[3] Again, "if people really act truthfully, they become able to know the pathway to salvation.', "Without truthful living", says Nanak, "the sea of illusion can not be crossed." (Sae binu bhavjalu jai ne taria)[4] Nanak further makes a significant pronouncement that "he is the servant of those devotees[5] who are truthful, pure and sublime."

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1. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, M.P., p. 59. Vol. No. I.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 135, Sri Rag M.1. Astpadi.
3. Ibid. p. 115, Sri Rag M.1. Sabad.
4. Ibid., p. 565, Ramkali Ki Var M.1.
5. Ibid., p. 237, Rag Gaudi M.1. Astpadi.

So, to conclude: Truth is the highest spiritual entity, God: and love of truth and Truthful life are the central moral virtues of pure water which constitute the motor force of man's spiritual pursuits. Mere intellectual comprehension of truth as an abstration is not enough; truth has got to be a part and parcel of man's actual living. In want of truth and life charged with it, no moral life leading to mystical life is possible.

2. Faith, Fortitude and Forgiveness :

(a) Faith in the Inscrutibility of the providential Bliss is the sister virtue of man's love of Truth. For, he who loves truth believes that truth alone triumphs ultimately सत्यमेव जयते In want of such a belief love of Truth is simply skin deep. Only in the moral soil of man's rock-like confidence in the ultimate goodness or blissfulness of all the happenings in one's individual and social life, the plant of truthfulness can fully blossom. A true lover of Truth is a firm believer of the maxim "God does good for all." He might not be able to discover goodness in the adverse circumstances that befall his way today. But the belief that whatever is happening is in strict obedience to divine dispensation, enable man to learn to up with any happening harmful or helpful in life. He begins to slowly understand that God's will alone prevails and that all pride to controvert or dispute it is a vai boast in the name of human reason. God is the Doer, not man. Man is at best the chosen instrument of God for implementing His dispensation. Whatever takes place in the world is Hss dictation, His doing. Nothing happens which He does not will. Says Nanak: "that alone happens what He wills; for nothing is in the hands of man."[1] His will is supreme. So, a believer resposes supreme confidence in the truthfulness and blissfulness of whatever happens, for every happening is the unfoldment of the Divine scroll. His Will prevails and only by His Grace can a man be a man of faith.

A man of faith entertains no doubts regarding the holiness of what is happening. To him, whatever, is happening is real, and so it is beyond man's questioning, though not beyond his polite inquisitiveness. For, says Nanak, he who obeys His Will, will never remain unhappy and will realise the truth.[2] So deep-seated is the faith of Nanak that he goes to the length of saying that even when the people of the world abuse or admire him, he will not be away from the feet of the Lord even for a second. "They may call me good or

1. Message of Sikhism, p. 96, Guru I. Sri Rag-by Harbans Singh.
2. Message of Sikhism, p. 96 Guru I. Sri Rag-by Harbans Singh.

evil, but I have thrown myself at Thy feet",[1] says he. Why? Because, to Nanak, Hari is his everything; his father, his mother, his uncle, his aunt, his wife his paramour, his son, his brother. None else but Hari is his supporter and saviour. (Hari binu taru ko ne sahai, kaki mati pita, sute vanita, ko kahu ko bhai).[2]

This conviction is born of the belief that His Will is the highest wisdom and it is the highest virtue of man to surrender himself at the feet of God and to subordinate his will to God's Will. Nanak says: 'Surrender thyself so mayest thou meet thy Lord. No other wisdom can be of any avail.'[3]

Evidently, therefore, Faith means and implies (a) belief in divine determinism,[4] (b) belief in the blissfulness of whatever happens, because every happening is the result of His Will:[5] (c) belief in His will as the highest wisdom,[6] and belief in man's act of subordinating his own will to God's Will as the highest of all moral virtues.[7]

Love of Truth and faith in God go hand in hand as the highest twin virtues in the life of Man on the moral path.

(b) **Fortitude:** God, the fountainhead of all human virtues, kindles love of Truth in human heart and in the light of that love is born its fellow virtue called faith. Faith, says a proverb, moves mountain; yes, mountain of adversities, of monstrous difficulties, and of unbearable pain. Faith does all that through fortitude.

Fortitude is the power which faith generates in human bosom, the power to suffer in patience, to combat with courage, and to overcome with wisdom. Fortitude is the inner core of the moral stamina of a virtuous man and is a composite of triple qualities of courage, wisdom and patience. A man of fortitude has the courage to combat evil with the wisdom that the evil will be ultimately uprooted and undone by good; and during the course of combat, however long, hazardous or tortuous, he keeps patience and labours with the belief that the Truth, which is the Good or God and in whose behalf he combats, will unfailingly register victory over the evil eventually. With smile he thus welcomes the pains and troubes which his combat with the evil necessarily entails and unleashes; with courage does he

1. Message of Sikhism, p. 95, Devnagari. Rag M.1.
2. Guru Granth Darshana—Jai Ram Mishra, p. 305, Rag Gaudi Chati.
3. Message of Sikhism, p. 96, Rag Tilang M.1.
4. Ibid., p. 49. Rag Asa.
5. Nanak Vani, p. 757. Rag Malar M.1. Astpadia.
6. Nanak Vani, p. 80. Japji 1.
7. Message of Sikhism, p. 48. by Harbans Singh.

encounter and face the disheartening and disappointing pitfalls or failures which temporarily beset his war-path; and with wisdom does he go or move forward on clearing the doubts and fears that befog his vision in his onward guerrilla march against the forces of evil inside and outside him. As a man of faith does not qualify his attitude towards life with 'ifs' and 'buts', so a man of fortitude does not allow himself to be cowed down in spirits by the troubles and torments of life. No difficulties however irksome or disappointing can ever dissuade him from his path of Truth. No temptations however great or alluring can bewitch or delude him to deviate from the moral highways of his spiritual life. Undeterred by difficulties, undaunted by disappointments, and unallured by temptations, the man of fortitude lumbers up his way to high spiritual cliffs of Supreme Consciousness with sufficient moral stamina and courage.

The way to God is not easy and God too tests his devotees in various ways. So one must be firm and steady in performing one's duty. Even if it be difficult and irksome, one must bear bravely all travails for the love of truth with the faith that the fire of travails will only burn the dross and purify the heart and make it golden and lend it a divine hue; one must resist all temptations and screw up one's courage to the level of the test. That is fortitude. Thus, the essence of the life of fortitude is that one's 'thought' shall be keener, heart purer and mind stronger, as faith in one's own might or prowess lessens and fath in God's grace grows.[1]

Guru Arjun Deva suffered the tortures at the hands of chandu, just to set an example of patience and sacrifice to his flock. The Sikh Gurus have exhibited memorable patience in the face of provocations and tortures. Guru Arjun says: "Thy Servant Nanak stands ready as a sacrifice", and again. "what thou givest, I treat as a blessing." The difficulties and dangers that come their way, the hellish tormentations and miseries that befall their lot, the painful confrontations and humiliations that they have to suffer are regarded by the men of fortitude as the prasad (प्रसाद) or the gift of God, always holy and beneficial for them.

The saga of the martyradom of the Sikhs is the saga of faith, fortitude and fearless forbearance of the highest order. They suffered for their faith and embraced death with an inspired tear of faith evoking smile on their lips and the Name on their tongues.

If love of truth makes man pro-God, and if faith in God makes man fall at the feet of God with a feeling of blissfulness in

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1. The Quintessence of Sikhism by Gobind Singh, p. 146.

divine determinism, the ideal of fortitude makes man deeply suffer sacrifice smilingly his every bit, even his life, at the altera of Truth. Fortitude is faith lived with courage and patience.

(c) **Forgiveness:** As love of truth and faith in God go together, so do the virtues of fortitude and forgiveness. Forgiveness is faith and fortitude in practise. It is highly humane in its impact and perfectly divine in its character. It is a rare virtue, for its practice is the ornament of only few man's life. Innumerable persons have come and gone without earning this most precious of all the charactaristics of good life. Nanak says: "Khimr vihunakhapi gayai khuhani Lakh asankh,'[1] 'countless people have perished without the spirit of forgiveness." The very fact that Nanak emphasizes the passing away of numberless number of persons from the world without inculcating in them the ability to pardon shows the utter necessity of this moral virtues in man's spiritual pursuit. All those who want to tread on the path of God-realisation must necessarily first imbibe the ability to return good even to those who do wrong to them. For. as Kabir says, "where the virtue of forgiveness prevails, there the Lord Himself resides."[2] Nanak himself says "Khojat khojat amrit piya, Khima gahi man satiguru dia" i.e.[3], after an untiring vigorous search I came to drink nectar; my heart adopted forgiveness and (then) the Sadguru gave me (the Name) "

It transpires from this description that in forgiveness ended Nanak's all hectic search after peace and that when he drank the ambrosial water of forgiveness, the Indwelling Divine Truth blessed him with the much needed tranquility Forgiveness is thus both the the beginning and the ending of all virtuous life.

Let us analyse and examine in brief the true moral and spiritual import of this virtue. When, why and how should a man forgive ? The very act of forgiving presupposes that some such wrong or bad has been done, that the man wronged has enough justification to punish the wrong-doer. The men of common rut go by the maxim 'tit for tat'. The wronged man, accordingly, is within the limits of legitimacy to take the wrongdoer to task. But if the wrongdoer is forgiven, both the pardoner and the paradoned soon get sweetened within and spontaneously become party to the secret joy of inner peace. The reasons for this double blessedness are not far to seek. WIsdom informs us that all men, in their own way, pray

1. Nanak Vani, p. 524, Rag Ram Kali M.1.
2. Guru Nanak and life and teaching, edited by Gurumukh Nihal Singh. p. 99 - Guru Granth Sahib. p 1372.
3. Nanak Vani. p. 519, Rag Ram Kali M.1.

to God and seek His forgiveness for the wrongs or sins committed by them consciously or unconsciously. And the Merciful God (दया सिन्धो करतार) bestows pardon on them.[1] It is, therefore, the moral obligation of all those in spiritual discipline to forgive people who do wrong to them in the same way in which they seek His forgiveness for their own sins. The virtue of forgiveness is thus moral in its orientation, human in its import, and spiritual in its core. It is spiritual in its core because it partakes of the experience of the unity of life, on the one hand,and of the fallibility of all finite beings, human or sub human on the other. Who is not fallible and who is not permeated with Him, the Perfect and the Omnipresent One ? The very fallibility of a human being on account of his imperfections and the very fact of His being Perfect and the Limitless ocean of forgiveness, on the one hand, and the essential oneness of the Creator and His creation, on the other, are enough to bring home to the aspirants the utmost necessity of cultivating the virtue of forgiveness as a moral and spiritual quality. It is with such an understanding that one has to grow into the habit of forgiving, which is the most difficult of all the virtues. But one should seek forgiveness in order to have it, though it is not necessary for the forgiver. in true spiritual sense, to be prayed for pardon. This first step in the act of forgiveness, as Guru Nanak points out, is: "Remove malice from your own heart; And behold ! the whole world is your friend."[2] Malice is thus the hurdle and world-fellowship is its answer only when mind is enlivened by and charged with faith in God, a man can have His vision in all forms of life, human, animal and vegetational, Then all distinctions of form disappear and only the light of Truth is seen. The difference of self and not-self melts and the light within rushes forwarded to mingle in the light everywhere. The event of Namdeo running after the bread-stealer dog praying him to take the butter also speaks of the spiritual kinship of one and all. This is not easy to practise, but even with the background of this enlightment, if one follows Guru's precept and endeavours to translate it in one's own life, one should first learn to wash from one's own heart malice, rancour and revenge. Faridji, a muslim mystic, thus sings out an exhortation "Farid, he who practices treachery with you. Do him good in return; Let not anger enter your heart."[3]

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 511 Rag Ram Kali M.1. Astpadia.
2. Message of Sikhism. Rag Gauri M.1, p. 140.
3. Ibid.,. p. 140. Faridji Sloka.

The Saint of Israel says 'Learn to receive blows and forgive those who insult you".[1] For is not God "nirvair" and merciful ? "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven".[2] This is the essence of forgiveness. Not only that one has to eschew anger and banish malice from one's heart, he has also to be kind and comforting to the wrong doer. For only when the negative wire constituted of angerlessness, malicelessness and revengelessness and the positive wire constituted of kindness and cosmofellowship meet that the comforting light of forgiveness is fully generated. That is why Farid, says: "Farid, he who gives a slap in your face, pay him not in the same coin; rather kiss his feet and retire home."[3]

Where is such forgiveness in the world ? Nanak says that those who practise forgiveness, participate in the work of God.[4] Rare are such persons, but those who forgive are free.[5] Only through such rarities the Grace of God flows in pardoning the punishable ones and in purifying the condemnable sinners. God alone is the forgiver and as such they should not even in dream take pride in the act or acts of their forgiveness. "Just as in the world, all crimes are punished by judges, but it is open to the King or the President of a State to grant amnesty in the same way", writes Prof. Gobind Singh Mansukhani in his work 'The Quintessence of Sikhism', "it is God's privilege to pardon an erring soul and exempt it from punishment."[6] It is likewise the solemn concern of the aspirants of God-realisation to conscientuosly and steadily imbibe the virtue of forgiveness. Nanak lived the age-old truth of spiriual world 'to err is human, and to forgive divine' and hinted in so many unspoken words by personal example that forgiveness is the sovereign of all virtues, which the aspirant on the spiritual path should practise Forgiveness recognizes only one bond, Humanity; it honours only one motive, Love, it hears only one voice, Human Fallibility.

3. Simplicity, Purity and Humility :

As faith, fortitude and forgiveness go together, so do simplicity, purity and humility. All godly follows are simple and pure and humble. They cannnt but be so.

Simplicity is the hallmark of great and virtuous life. It is for the soul what athletics is for the body. As by regular physical exerc-

1. Wisdom of Israel, p. 204.
2. Luke : 6, 37.
3. Message of Sikhism, p. 140. Faridji Shalokas.
4. Ibid.
5. Nanak Vani, p. 741. Rag Saran Ki var M.1. —Govind Singh.
6. Quintessence of Sikhism, p. 123. Dr. Gobind Singh.

ises man can build beauty and strength in his body, so can he build beauty and kindle light of Truthfulness in his soul by loveful practicc of the virtue of simpliicity. An earnest man on the path of God-realisation is simple in all aspects of his life in word, thought and deed. He is simple in his food and drink, simple in dress and disposition, simple in lodging and manners, simple in speech and style, and all that.

Simplicity in dress and food exhibits itself in many ways. The man of simplicity spends very little time in eating and drinking. He prefers very simple food to the best masterpieces of the culinary art. He does not eat many times a day, and he does not partake of many courses at a meal. He eats to live, he does not live to eat. Among sauces or appetisers, he is fondest of 'hunger', the sauce that is given gratis by Nature. He avoids all narcotics and stimulants as far as possible, or uses them with extreme moderation. For gluttony and addiction to wine or narcotics lead the aspirants no where in moral and spiritual life. "By drinking wine", says Nanak "one comes to grief."[1] Never can the slave of food and drink achieve virtue and wisdom. His soul is in his palate and his stomach; his will is weak and his brain is always clouded. He becomes a mere physical machine, insensible to great thoughts and noble feelings. The subtle meditational inward journey into Self needs a light stomach so that the aspirant may not fall into sleep, the bewitching sister of gluttony. In the magic spell of excessive sleep caused by exececssive eating, the moral life of man languishes and his devotion becomes a victim of spiritual anemia. Thus it is that the Sikh Gurus, following Nanak, have time and again warned the people against the vice of gluttony and addictions, and propagated a life of temperance and simplicity. 'Sleep less and eat moderately',[2] The third Guru said. Nanak Deve says: "They have crossed all worldly hurdles who do not eat much."[3] It should not, however, mean that simply by 'not eating much' one can achieve salvation. Optimum eating helps man well for success in a regulated course of prayers and constant meditation on the Name of God. Only meditating thus then, crossing of the worldly sea becomes possiblie. That is the import of Nanak's exhortation on moderation in eating. As with eating, so with dressing. He spends very little on dress. His clothes are neither expensive, nor ostentatious, nor superfluous in quantity. But they are neither dirty, nor torn, nor shabby. Simplicity here means only cleanliness

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1. The Quintessence of Sikhism, p. 125. Dr. Gobind Singh.
2. Message of Sikhism, p. 135. Rag Ram Kali M. 3. —By Harbans Singh.
3. Ibid., p. 135, Rag Asa M.1.

and the bare minimum of dresses. The modern mind, however, may call it a cult of poverty. But that is a wrong attitude, for the poor have a tendency to dislike simplicity. Poverty does not teach simple ways and habits. One may buy cheap articles of pearls, gandy beads, garishly coloured garments, rouge power, and lipstik, and thus sin against the rule of simplicity. Nanak reminds people that the tailor and drapper can not add a simple micron to the stature of man's personality. What man is counts more than what man wears. Sound health, good conduct, and the name divine are better cosmetics than all the powders and creams sold in Paris.

What count most behind all this simplicity of food and dress is the simplicity of man's inner life. It is the orientation that counts, for all that happens in the material world happens first in the mental world. Simplicity of outlook manifests itself in gentleness of disposition and character. With the name of God within and vision of God everywhere in the animate and inanimate things and beings of the world, the aspirant can not but be simple, humble and gentle in thought and deed. But the cases there are which tell us of the angry and haughty disposition of persons in position of honour and dignity. Even some saints, like Durvasa, are said to be possessed by anger and irritable dispositions, inspite of the fact that they were simple in dress, lodging, food etc. Simplicity in dressing etc. is no guarantee of simplicity in disposition. One has to be simple in every sphere of one's activity. Nanak, therefore, asks the people to love simplicity in thought, eschew anger and extravagance, banish ostentation and artificiality, and practise moderation in food and dress. For anger, extravagance and artificiality can not but excite disgust and derision and tell upon the moral and mental health of the man. As A.V. Palten has truely said:

> "The brightly arrayed, it is,
> true, can enchant, yet it
> wearies us.
> The simple gives ever refreshment
> to eye of the soul."

Simplicity is an all round phenomenon. All aspects of human life need to be refreshed and enlivened by the virtue of simplicity. The aspirant is supposed to be simple in his talks, in his manners, in whatever he does. Nanak does rightly say "whereever we go, we should talk gently."[1] "to talk evil is to waste breath";[2] "Here, O friend ! One who speaks insipid things, comes

1. Message of Sikhism, p, 134, Rag vedhana M.1.-Harbans Singh.
2. Ibid., p. 134, Rag Parbhati M.1.

to grief"[1] The sum and substance of all this that a man of simplicity is a man of simple, gentle, plain and restrained speech. He even goes to the extent of telling in the solemn upanishadic way: "where speech will not succeed, it is better to be silent."[2] In other words, he who is simple is unassuming in his dealing with other persons; is easily accessible to persons eager to establish communion with him for spiritual or human purposes, even without previous appointment (अतिथि देवो भव-); is plain, upright and straightforward in what he says and does. For if such people are not easily accessible, then seeking the company of the good people in (Parmarth) will remain a vain pursuit and meaningless precept. Precisely, it is in this sense that man should be simple in behaviour and noble in thought. For, high thinking and simple living necessarily go together, Lack of simplicity, says Nanak, is the mark of an inferior intellect, and a pettifogging, self conceited soul. Only when the aspirant, as a householder, follows simplicity in real life, it can be said that he is becoming successful on the path of his love of truth and truthful living.

(b) Purity:

Simplicity tempered with purity paves the divine pathway to humility. For simplicity without purity is nothing more than a social virtue of no ethical import for spiritual progress. Simplicity in dress, food and drinking is good, but not enough. For it may be a virtue even with the atheist. Only when simplicity evolves out of the purity of heart, painfully and gradually attained by constant meditation on the name of God, that it is freed from its wordly contamination. There are men whose life is a living model of simplicity, but they have nothing to do with spirituality. Simplicity without divinity is a possibility, because it evolves, in that case. out of sheer humanitarian outlook. The very soil of its growth is different. Since it is purely human in its orientation, and since there are multiple human ideals and numerous ways to realise them, the virtue of simplicity born out of human considerations is bound to be multi-directional and earthly. But simplicity evolved out of purely spiritual consideration is motivated by one single, ideal of God-realisation, and even when there are multiple paths leading to God, simplicity in this case is only unidirectional and spiritual in its orientation. Only when it grows in the soil of spiritual fertility that simplicity takes a unidirectional and divine hue. And, we are concerned only with such simplicity which nothing else than purity of heart extroverted. Fran-

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1. Message of Sikhism, page 134 Rag Sri, M.1.
2. Ibid., Rag Magh, M.1.

kly, simplicity and purity are the two aspects, extrinsic and intrinsic of one single love of truth like the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

"On two wings" says Thomas a Kempis, "is a man lifted up above earthly things, on simplicity and purity; simplicity of purpose and purity in affection. Simplicity has God for its end, purity takes hold of Him and tastes Him."[1] In other words, simplicity is purity in embryo whereas purity is simplicity perfected. Simplicity is conceived in purity (i.e., God) and purity is the consumation of simplicity. God alone is Simple and Pure. All who seek Him should learn to be simple and pure, because God resides in the heart of the seekers. To develop these divine qualities is to be godly, to rise much above earthly things. "Blessed are simple, for they shall have much peace."[2] Says Nanak "They alone are pure who meditate on God and drink the nectar; O, you the living creatures! Meditate on the Name round the clock; even the impious become pious by the recitation of Name."[3] Nanak says that just as a dirty cloth can be washed by rubbing it with soap, in the same way the heart, polluted by sins or evil, can be cleaned by the mystical power of Name. Forgetfulness of God is the original sin. Rememberance of God is the undoing of the sin and the doing of the most holy of all acts. Constant remem berance of God purifies and cleanse the heart of the dust-heap of sins of the previous births and equips man with the moral strength to liberate himself from worldliness and to relive in God eternally.

Purity, as a moral preparation, should thus begin with the repetition of God's name so that the aspirant may achieve purity of speech, mind. and action. Purity of speech, mind and action means God-centred speaking, thinking and doing. That is, man should utter and do such things which inspire and attract the hearers and observers toward the desirability of doing godly and good things; and which gently dissuade them from doing ungodly or bad things. Purity of mind, likewise, means and implies negation of thinking bad about other persons, of harbouring ill-will towards the wrong-doers, of even mentally cursing the people; it also implies entertainment of feelings of good-will for others, of thinking the ways and means of returning good to the evil-doers, of secretly praying God seeking relief for those in trouble.[4]

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1. The Imitations of Christ, by Thomas Kempes, p. V in Introduction.
2. Ibid.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 774. Rag Malar Ki Var M.1.
4. The Quintessence of Sikhism, p. 148.—Gobind Singh.

As impurity of heart is greed, that of mind ill-will, and that of tongue untruth, so the impurity of the eye is coveting another's wealth, or wife. So, again, the impurity of the ears is listening to calumny, to other's criticism or condemnation. Truth alone is pure and purifying. It is, therefore, of great importance, says Nanak, to purify the tongue by speaking the Truth and avoiding blasphemous utterance in a polite way, for that is the purity of speech; to purify the ears by listening not to calumny but only to the glory and greatness of God, for that is the purity of audition; to purify the eyes by praying for the sanctifying vision of Hari to stay in them for ever and by praying to the Lord in enabling the eyes not to be coveted by the beauteous froms of human flesh or the attractions of worldly life, for that is the purity of sight; to purify the nasal doors by not allowing any breath to go waste in absence of 'Nam-sumiran' i e, rememberance of the name of God, for that is the purity of breath; to purify the heart and mind by fixing them both at the lotus feet of the Aimighty and by dissuadihg them through 'Nam Sumiran' and prayers from harbouring ill-will, malice, greed, anger against any one, for that is the purity of intellect and heart. The source of all purity is God and, therefore, loveful devotion to God and sincere gratitude towards Guru are the main spiritual guarantees against any impurity. Guru Nanak says:

> A person is pure, if he enshrines the True
> Name with him, His body is imbuded with fear
> of True One And his tongue loves the taste of
> Truth. He, by God's Grace, is in the state of
> ecstasy, his body is of passions free."[1]

A life of purity is a life of voluntary godliness and is thus bound to be infectious. A man of purity coming in contact with other men will certainly evoke a feeling of purity in them, though only gradually. For purity begets purity as peace begets peace. Purity is thus a double-edged virtue; it helps its own devotee in developing the power of goodness in mind and of godliness in his words and works; and it helps other ones by evoking in their hearts a healthy and favourable response toward the things that make for purity. That is how the virtue of purity lifts people high up above earthliness piercing, without inflicting pain, the thick and subtle veils of ego centric pettiness and shallowness of mind and transports them into the realm of Wisdom (of the unity of life) and well being (of one and all), where Goodness, in the light of godliness, reigns supreme.

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1. Hymns of Guru Nanak, by Kushwant Singh. Sri Rag M.1., p. 69.

To sump up: as simplies implicity reduction or renunciation of desires, doing gentle deeds and uttering gentle words from the core of the heart, so does purity imply washing away one's own ill-will and weaving work's and words of good will for others.

(c) Humility:

Where the holy water of purity and simplicity wells up there the lily of humilitv buds out simultaneously and automatically. Humility and purity are virtues honeycombed with each other. Only he who is pure can be humble. For, is not humility purity in action? In purity is hidden the seed which slowly sprouts up, grows and blossoms into a full some lily of humility. Humility consists of bowing down low to the level of the total obliteration of one's ego. Only the highest and the purest in thought can afford to be really humble. "He who calls himself low, is the highest of high", says the Fifth Guru [1] The Guru further exhorts the aspirants: "Become the dust of everybody's feet, And behold; everyone is your well-wisher." Speaking of those who are the humblest of the humble, the dust of the feet of all, Farid says: "Farid, deride not the dust, for there is nothing like it; while living we tread over it, and after death, it gives us a cover." Only the men of purer and higher wisdom are humble.

The people of pure mind think high and cover the summits of the mystical truth like the up-soaring skylark, but untouched and untarnished by even an iota of the pride of the experiential knowledge of the truth. They live with bowed heads and humble hearts like that very bird which keeps its nest down on the earth. Humility as a moral quality is just like the rain water which does not stay on high hills, but goes deep down on the ground level of the plains. It is like the grace of God which does not stay on the high grounds of human hearts puffed up by the vice of pride and vanity, but flows into the lowest of low.[2] A man of humility can be likened to a tree which laddened with fruits as it is, bends down groundward. 'Knowledge breeds humility' (विद्या ददाति विनयं). It is one of the well known truths that he who has known the Truth has effacted his ego, and the annihilation of ego expresses itself in a life of humility simultaneously preceded by simplicity and purity. Nanak says that if persons manufacture or make the dagger of truth by ceaseless chanting of the Name, then the greed-blood will completely ooze out of them and they will ride right into the castle of the lord. Such

1. Message of Sikhism—by Harbans Singh, Rag Guari, p. 133.
2. Ibid., p. 139. Rag Sri M. 1.

riders, with the truth knife hanging down their waste, says Nanak, should not feel puffed up but should atonce fall down headlong and lead a life of humility.

(कमरि कटारा बंकडा बंके का असवारु । गरबु न कीजे नानका, मतु सिरि आवै भारु).[1]

On 'what humility is', Guru Nanak says: To accept thy Name is to be humble before you' (तुधुनो निवणु मनणु तेरा नाउ).[2] The test of humility is thus the measure of one's loveful bowing down before every one of Lord's creation. To be humble before the Name of God means and implies to be humble before everybody who accepts the Name, in the limited sense of the term, and before everybody in this vast. vast creation by way praying "तेरे भांणे सरबत का भला" in a very broad sense of the term.

Guru Nanak further points out there are two ways of bowing down: One with purity, and the other with malice. The bowing down with malice and deceipt is a very dangerous activity. When the hunter bows down doublefold the deception is cast on the deer whom he soon kills down.[3] In hunter's bowing low, there is a hidden emotion of violence through deception. Such bowing is bad, for it is motivated by ill-will. Goswami Tulsidas has also beautifully described this kind cf humility thus; ' नवनि नीच के अति दुख दाई । जिमि अकुस धनु उरग बिलाई' .[4] It is no use humbling till the heart is impure. Bowing down with purity is a composite of many virtues put together. Learn three things, said Nanak to a disciple, "Be humble before everyone, be ever humble of speech, and forgive everybody. Thou shalt attain liberation."[5] Humility of this type is the source of moral courage and strength. "Only a humble person can forgive and show fortitude and moral courage."[6]

Humility is young only in the springtide of purity. Purity is on its noontide in the perfection of simplicity. Any aspirant of spiritual life must make enough room for these virtues to grow in his life. For, according to Nanak, "humility is the essence of virtuous conduct."[7]

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 571. Ram Kali, M 1. Paudi 1.17.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 497. Ram Kali, M.1. Chaupadai. Sabad.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 345. Rag Asha M 1. Sloke. 27.
4. Ram Charitra Manas, Aranya Kand.
5. Janam Sakhi. Bhai Bala, p. 155.
6. Dr. Trilochan Singh in his article "Guru Nanak's Religion: A comparative study of Religion" contributed to Guru Nanak; His life Time and teaching. edited by Guru Mukh Nihal Singh, p. 99.
7. Message of Sikhism, p. 139—Guru I. Rag Asa—Harkan Singh.

Conscientiousness, Contentment and Continence :

Conscientiousness, like other virtues of purity, simplicity and humility, is rooted in hearing the voice of conscience and acting accordingly; conscience is the inner voice within the individual, the intimation of soul giving him guidance time and again regarding the right and the wrong, the things to be done and not to be done, the course to be and not to be adopted. The inner struggle between the ever contesting forces of evil and good can be ended by either hearing or hushing the Word of conscience.

He who hears and obeys the Word is a conscientious man and he who hears and hushes the Word away is a sensuous man. On hearing the Conscience or the Word depends the moral evolution of a person. Few there are who brush aside the temptations by hearing the inner Word and climb up the moral ladder. Many there are who fall a pray to the temporary forces of evil and, therefore, ignore the Word. By regularly and constantly ignoring the Word, man becomes highly immoral Persistent forces of evil blunts the conscience and suppress it, to the great detriment of man's moral upbringing and spiritual evolution. Conscience is the spokesman of God, the indwelling light and all pervading Truth, and very few have the blessings to hear and do what the conscience has to say. Such blessed ones attain peace by hearing the Word and are happy. Conscientious people are thus the men of conscience; and conscientiousness is the essential quality of a moral man to hear the Word and direct his activities accordingly.

To be conscientious is to be hearful of the Word. In the four celebrated poems Nanak describes the effects of hearing the Word. The recurring musical note or refrain of all these four poems (Japji 8, 9, 10 and 11) is: 'Those that hear, death do not fear; Their sorrows end and sins disappear," "By hearing the Word." says Nanak, "men" achieve wisdom, saintliness, courage and contentment; learn of the earth, the power that supports it, and the firmament; learn of upper and nether regions, of islands and continents; conquer the fear of death and the elements. O Nanak, the Word hath such magic for the worshippers, those that hear, do not fear, their sorrows end and sins disappear."[1] Word is a power which man has to reckon and make use of. By itself Word simply arises in human mind as the wisdom-note of the soul, but it does not directly compel man to pay heed to it and obey. Word is the perfect symbol of freedom, the speech divine, which if man listens can become a Master, a guide, a

1. Nanak Vani, p. 83, Japuji 8., English Verson by Dr. Kushwant Singh- Hymns of Nanak, p. 47.

Saint (सुणिये.पीर सिद्ध सुरिनाथ.).[1] Word is God's voice surging up in human heart through conscience; and God alone is the perfect democrat in the world, the only free entity, so the Word which wells up in man's conscience leaves him free to hear it and follow it or not. By not hearing the Word, the empire of ego is established and extended. By hearing it, ego is gradually extinguished or sublimated and finally submerged into the Lord. And, in the process of this merging, man goes on acquiring the traits of divine nature which ultimately make him a Master, a Guide and a Saint. This is becoming conscientious.

"By hearing the Word", Nanak further points out, "mortals are to godliness raised; foul-mouthed are filled with pious praise; the art of yoga and all the secrets of body and mind are unveiled; the wisdom of Vedic scriptures is in fully revealed "[2] For the Word is the fount of all scriptures Word is wisdom. Only the hearer knows its blessings, its power, its marvel and magic spell.

By hearing the Word, Nanak goes on singing, 'one need not go to any of the sixty eight pilgrimages, one automatically achieves scholastic distinction, one's mind is easily led to meditation.[3] By hearing the Word, one plumbs the depths of virtue's sea and acquires bearing, holiness and royalty; the blind ones see and their paths are made visible, and fathomless becomes fordable."[4] "The Word has," says Nanak, "such magic for the worshippers", those that hear, death do not fear, their sorrows end and sins disappear."[5] As a matter of fact to hear the Word is to hear the Truth and to be truthful is to be conscientious, in a big way.

This Word is thus to be taken as a command and a counsel. In Critical movements of indecision to opt for a course seemingly good or bad, there comes up from the inner tongue to the inner ear a note of counsel: "Don't do that" or "do that" or "both". This cautioning counsel is heard but more often than not it is ignored because of the overpowering temptation to follow the way prohibited by the Word. In disobeying the Word, sorrows begin and sins appear. Disobedience to the Word is a pathway to the world of Ego. By implication, it is not enough to hear the Word, one has to obey it. It is to be taken as a command of God to be obeyed as the paramount Duty.[6] To be conscientious is to be dutiful.

1. Nanak Vani, p. 83.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 88. Japji IX.
3. Ibid., Japji X.
4. Nanak Vani, p. 88. Japji XI.
   Ibid.
   Guru Granth Darshan, p. 225—Jai Ram Mishra.

This is the conscientiousness of highest spiritual significance and must find itself manifested on the moral plane, where to be conscientious is to be dutiful as a good householder, as an ideal husband, wife, mother, father, brother, sister, teacher, disciple, trader, customer, worker on farm or on factory machine etc. To obey the Word is a distant mystical course but to obey the moral laws given by those who had heard the Word is the bounden obligation of us all. Conscientiousness works on two planes: moral and spiritual. The aspirant should be both morally and spiritully conscientious. Conscientiousness on the spiritual plane includes conscientiousness on the moral plane, but not vice versa. Through obedience to the moral laws he may be able to obey the spiritual laws i.e., the Law or the Word of God by Guru's grace. One should keep the body clean and pure because it is the temple of God; one should be temperate in food and drink, one should respect the elders and do one's duty to family, to community, to country, to humanity; one should be affectionate to one's juniors or younger one's and minister to their needs if possible; one should be friendly and co-operatative with one's equals and be jovial and welcoming even to the strangers; one should practise kindness, courtesy, hospitality and fellowship; one should be honest in one's dealings, frank, straightforward and fearless. One should earn one's own living lawfully,[1] and should not be a burden or parasite on society or household resources [2] All these one should do with the supreme awareness that God is there to take account of all one does, what one should not do, and does not do what one should.[3] This intellectual awareness of the presence of justice-doing of some supra-human entity may bring man on the moral path of humane social living; and if the moral life is supported by faith in God and by a well regulated course of prayer or worship there is a possibility that the conscience may open its mounth and let the Word come out. And, then, if the aspirant hears and obeys the Word, this very moral equipment of being conscientious in day to day domestic and social living may in due course of time open up apertures of the spiritual world, showing pathway to God-realisation.

Contentment

Contentment is the spiritual diet and the support of a conscientious fellow traversing the pathway to God.[4] Without this diet

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1. Scred writings of Sikhs, p. 116.
2. Ibid., p. 85.
3. Ibid., p. 77.
4. Nanak Vani, p. 168. Sri Rag ki Var M.1.

man's spiritual health tends to run downward course. But a conscientious fellow equipped with the virtue of fortitude cannot but acquire contentment if he meditates on God's name with love, faith and continuity. "Faith and contentment are the food of angelic beings" says Nanak [1] Contentment is the spiritual tonic which grows of its own accord in man's mind as and how his meditation on the Name deepens. The wise regard contentment as the best and the uncommonest of all the qualities of human mind. Only the truthful have it, and those who have contentment are truly happy, blessed and peaceful. The heart of the poet Robert Southwell sang out in ecstatic joy:

> "My conscience is my Crown,
> Contented thoughts my rest;
> My heart is happy in itself,
> My bliss is in my heart".[2]

Contentment and conscientiousness go together like the fragrance and the flower. As the beams spread all over when the moon appears in the nightful sky, so does the refreshing sweetness of contentment permeate the entire gamut of activities when the lotus of conscientiousness blossoms in the sinful mire of man's life. All mires are not fit for the lotus to grow. Only in the mire submerged in the holy water of humility and purity the lotus of conscientiousness grows and blooms when the rays of the Sun of truthfulness kiss it Spiritual life is the totality of a mystical discipline, the progressive march where one registers victory after victory over vices and finally subjugates one's Ego the king and creator of vices as well as the foremost, fiercest and the most formidable foe of spirituality. And, as and how the arsenals of Ego i.e., the Vices fall down, the directive control and supervisory powers of Virtues grow and multiply, making the spiritual life of the aspirants healthy by the flavourous and sweet tonic of contentment.

Contentment is in the subtle and spiritual world what satisfaction is in the gross and the material world. When man's physical hunger is over, he is said to be satisfied; and when man's psychical worry or anxiety is over he is said to be consoled. So also when man's sickness of soul is over, he is said to be contented. Contentment is the spiritual solace of the heart of the Lotus Way-farer. It has got nothing to do with the material things of the world, nor with the satisfaction arising out of the enjoyment of those things.

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1. Message of Sikhism, p 143. Guru. I Shlokas—Harban Singh.
2. Quoted by Pt. Gopi Nath in his commandable work on Bhartrihari, p. 306.—Vairagya Salok verse 32 in a foot note.

Contentment is a spiritual stuff which grows out of man's firm faith in God, in the justness of His divine scheme of life and creation, and of his godly or truthful life; and is projected on mental and material plane in the form of man remaining satisfied with what ever little, much or nothing he has. Only on the confluence of three riverine virtues in the life of the lover of truth and liver of truthfulness is seem rising the rainbow of the quietest spiritual calm of contentment. These three virtues are: renunciation of worldliness reconciliation with the Will of God i e , with divine distination; and inclucation of one single supreme desire, on the consumation of all other desires, the disire of being one with the Supreme Lord of all the worlds. Rare is such a confluence and rare, therefore, are the men of contentment. Only the contented ones can have the vision of the Perfect.[1]

The mystical poet Kabir, says, "without contentment goes Sheikh for Haj to Kaba; Kabir, in whose heart there is no contentment, how can he attain God ?"[2] True indeed, no one can scale the highest ascent in spiritual life without contentment. A discontented mind is a hindrance in the pursuit of the knowledge divine. Contentment is the elixir of spiritual life, for it makes man throughly conscientious, comforts him in deepening his meditation on the Word, and helps him to easily mingle with the object of his loveful devotion.[3]

Let us pry deeper into the origin and anatomy of contentment with the help of Nanak's following most celebrated meditational hymn on the point:

> "Nanak, for the soulful human, there are a
> chariot and charioteer. Age after age they
> change; yea, the wise ones know it all.
> In the age of 'Satya' contentment is the
> chariot and Dharma is its Driver.
> In the age of 'Treta' continence is the
> chariot and Power its Driver.
> In age of 'Dwapar' Austerity is the
> chariot and charity its Driver.
> In the age of 'Kali' of fire is the
> chariot and falsehood is its Driving force.
> In the time of Sama Veda, the Lord was decked
> in white; and one's coming and going and abiding
> were in Truth.

1. Message of Sikhism, p. 143. Guru I. Shlokas—Harbans Singh.
2. Message of Sikhism, p. 142. Kabirji Shalokas.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 654. Maru Sohala M.1.

In the time of the Rig Veda, they say, the name
of the All pervading Lord was Rama; yea, the
highest among gods;
And, he, who uttered His name, departed his sins
and deliverance he secured. In the time of Yajur
Veda, his name, they say, was Krishna of the
Yadva tribe, who reduced chandravali by force,
And who to Vrindavan brought the Elysion tree
(from the heavens) for, his Gopi (Satya Bhama),
and revelled Vrindavana.
In the time of Artharva Veda, Yea, the
Kali.age, Allah became the name of God, who
Decked Himself in blue, and Assumed the
Attributes of a Turk and a Pathan. The four
Vedas thus proclaim their Truth; And they, who
read and reflect on them, know what is merit,
demerit.

But (Sayeth) Nanak: "He who is devoted to the Lord in His Love worship, and in humility dwells he alone attains Deliverance."[1]

Here, in the above song, Nanak speaks of the fourfold epic division of Time. It is wonderful that the ancient sage Veda Vyas, the famous writer of eighteen Purans and great epic Mahabharata also spoke of these very four ages. According to the literary testimony of the epic and the puranas Veda Vyas lived in the 'Kaliyuga' the fourth age in the chronological order.

Nanak too speaks of his age as the Kaliyuga characterised by the marauding spirit of the Turks, the Pathans and the Mughals. He points out at the very outset of this hymnal song that there can only two types of living beings in the world-those whose eyes are opened on God (मेरु सरीर) i.e., the 'soulful' bodies: and those who are blind to God in them (सरीर) i.e., mere 'bodies' and that he speaks of the attitude and four stages of the lives of the soulful creatures. As there are four ages in the larger panoramic canvas of Time, so are there four ages, in the form of stages of existence, in the life of the soulful creatures. As the Nathas believe, as in the cosmos so in the body, Nanak rightly sees four ages in man's life as he finds four ages in the life of the physical universe. And, at each stage of existence there is a subtle body and a subtle driver in that body. Nanak calls this subtle body (रथ) and its driving Force (रथवाहु). The first

1. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Translation by Dr. Gopal Singh, p. 463.

stage is the age of 'satya' i.e., Truth. In this stage contentment is the chariot and Dharma is its charioteer. This is, let us reasonably assume, to begin with the stage of childhood, of utter innocence. The child has no desire of his own, no dream, no distration. He is in the flow of 'dharma' and has nothing but purei nnocence and perfect contentment in his mind. Dharma i.e., the Holder of life, God and Santokha i e. contentment always go together. That is the gist of the age of Satya which is the highest stage of spiritual realisation. Only in child like heart does God make His permanent abode. But as the child grows of age and physique, he struts away from the first stage of innocence and falls into the second stage of existence which Nanak calls the age of 'Treta'. In this 'treta' age the 'soulful' beings begins to flow into others subtle body (रथ) to be driven by the other subtle charioteer. In this age he comes out of the chariot of contentment and rides on the chariot of continence (जेते) to be driven by its charioteer, power (जोह). This is indicative the fall from the highest and purest and first leave of truthful and contented existence to that of the second level of consciousness where mind is still hooked into the first charioteer but he is moving in the new chariot driven by the new charioteer. Here the place of 'dharma' has been taken by'Power', the power of maya indeed. For the child now begins to possess fragmentary but reflex action understanding of the mother which feeds him or her on her breast This is just the beginning of the worldly power of attachment to the feeder power, mother. But in moments of satisfaction the child is forgetful of all, even of the mother, and is again in the loveful remembrance of the first charioteer 'Dharma' which is the bestower and driver of contentment. But soon when the temporary satisfaction provided by the milk of human breasts is over, the hungry child cries for satisfying protection of the power of the milk-giving mother, who leaving all other works loving by rushes forward, like selfless God, to comfort the baby on her warmth-giving, feeder breasts. The body is again satisfied and again goes into the spell of the first chariot and charioteer, but with the return of hunger it cries for power again. This process goes on till the mind of soulful second chariot is ruled by its driver, Power (जोह). As time lapses, days and months and years roll by, the child further slips into the third level of existence where 'austerity' is the chariot and 'charity' its charioteer. Here, on this level the child comes of age a little more and recognises certain beings other than the mother also. The mother also leaves the child to the care of other relatives and busies herself with her work till the baby loses patience with the other ones and bursts out crying in tearful shrieks and sobs. Only when she finds that the child can in no case be

comforted or silenced except by her protective presence that she extends her charitable embrace, fondling lap and her breasts to the child to quieten and feed her. Very accurately has thus Nanak described the child's efforts of weeping, wailing and rough throwing of hand and feet as 'austerity', and the mothers leisurely coming to feed and console the baby as 'charity'. That is, in this third stage, austerity is the chariot and charity is the driving force of life. As in the second stage, when the mother used to lovingly rush down as a result of the law of love to the baby, at its firsts cry, to comfort and to keep it in control (जेते), the mother now does not show that much of anxiety at the third stage of the child progress in the material and regress in the spiritual world. In the third stage also the mind of the child is initially hooked piece meal to the second charioteer as it was in the second stage hooked to the first one; but with the passage of time, the child becomes the confirmed passanger of the third chariot. And, again, with the rolling of the wheel of time, when the child gains more flesh and more years of age, he no longer likes to be ruled by the third charioteer. He begins to think and make judgments on his own and refuses to be dictated by mother or father or anyone. He simply obeys them out of love and respect in the beginn ing, out of compulsion thereafter, and when the promptings of his heart come in serious conflict with the dictates of the parents, teachers or relations, he disobeys them first by playing truant and then by practising tyranny. This process is slow, long and tortuous. In this phase or stage of life, he burns with his own passions lust, anger, hate, malice and all that and Nanak fittingly gives it the name of 'Kaliyuga' i.e., the age of Death; yes, death of all outer disciplines and suspension of inner controls. He violently rushes out of the third and gets aboard on the fourth chariot made of 'fire' (अग्नि), fire, of passions, and allows himself to foolishly ruled and led by 'falsehood'. (कूड़), the fourth charioteer. This is the downward journey of the 'soulful' creature from the level of Truthfulness and Contentment the level of unity with God to the level of Fire and Falsehood, where he lives for sometime in a heinous state of forgetfulness of God. Only when he recollects his lost memory of his being the permanent denizen of the eternal empire of Truth (God) that he rebegins his return journey to Godhood with which all of us are supposed to be concerned, at least as analysts, if not aspirants, of spiritual life of course.

This fall of man from Godhood, from one level to the other till the fourth level of 'fire' of passions, where 'falsehood' reigns supreme is reached, is caused by man's separation from Him.

Speaking about the hellfire of passions, Nanak holds out before man's eyes the "four rivers of fire" (चारे नदिया अगि) in which his life is every moment burning: the fires of greed, violence, anger and attachment. The span of man's age, during which he is the victim of these passions, is called 'Kaliyuga'. A slave of passions wants to fill his ears with enjoyable and exciting music, to fix his gaze on the erotic dances of the winged, fleeting damsels, to endear his heart to the fleeting joys of the sensuous world of riches and fleshes. This bottomless firepit of passions is Desire (तृष्णा) in which countless people fall and bring ruin upon themselves. Only when the ghastly ruin overwhelms them, that the feeling of remorse and repentance surges up in their hearts; and they, in the poetic but realistic expression of the Recluse King Bharatrihari, might ventilate their anguish thus:

"इह हो मधुर गीत न्तयमेत द्रसोऽयं स्फुरती परिमलोऽयं स्पश एष स्तनानाम ।
इति हत परमार्थेरिन्द्रियें भ्रम्यमाणः स्वहित करण धूर्तैः पञ्चभिर्व ऽजयोऽडामि'.[1]

"Here is the sweet voice to hear, graceful dance to see, ambrosial juice to taste, fragrant scent to smell and lovely breasts to touch; being thus deceived by my five senses which are very clever to secure their own ends, and destroy the supreme objective, I am wandering uselessly about the world." This realisation by man of the deceptive senses which have damaged and distracted his spiritual life altogether brings him nearer to the fundamental fact worthy of all men's realisation that 'like our shadows, our wishes lengthen as our Sun declines'. As the sun of life begins to decline and the evening of life is at hand, man begins to understand the lesson of the futility of sensual pleasures, as also of things and relations which he so far regarded as most useful Better late than never. In this context, Nanak Deva exhorts the yogis of the cult of Matsyendra Nath in the following way :

"Here, O, Matsyendara Nath control these five and waver not from your yoga. Only through victory (over the five senses of lust, anger, pride, attachment and greed), you will attain liberation for yourself and your family".[2] Nanak continues his exhortation by further pointing out that the real alms which the yogi should seek is a heart filled with God's fear and life of devotion to Truth (भिखिया भाई भगति भै चलै); and that the contentment is the most precious of all (yogic) satisfactions (होवै सु तृपतिसंतोखि अमुलै).[3]

1. Vardgaya Satkam, 112. Sri Ram.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 495, Ram Kali M.1. Chaupada.
3. Ibid

Beginning with the moral and manly urgency achieving freedom from the five fires, man's spiritual journey should thus keep Truth as its beacon light and contentment as its spiritual refreshment or luggage. When the Bud of this knowledge begins to blossom and the consequential rise of high aspirations and desire for mundane gain are entirely subsided, then alone man is again set or poised to attian that sort of supreme contentment which is, says Bharatrihari, even coveted by Indra, the Lord of gods, who through advancement of age has grown too much addicated to his love of wealth and livelihood.

The realisation that God alone is our saviour and that our life must be a sincere dedication to His worship constitutes the first step of Man on his return journey to Him from where he came and to whom he eternally belongs. This is the beginnig of the Lotus Way (कमल मार्ग).[1] Truth is its polestar and contentment is its journey-fodder. Precisely speaking, we have come to our present fallen state from the 'Satya yoga' (union with God); and from our current stage of 'Kaliyuga' (broken away from God), we have to accomplish our upward journey into the stage of Truth whereof Contentment is the golden ride. "O, heart !" says Nanak, "be quiet and give up thy billowy and unsteady motion; do not attach thyself to the perishable pleasures of the world and seek ever lasting contentment and bliss within thy own self"[2]

Contentment thus belongs to the realm of Truth and is the intertwining virtue of Truthfulness[3] Truth and contentment dance together on the rhythmic beat produced by the spiritual music which the orchestra of the devotional heart produces.[4] As a result of this mystical dance and music, the seeker hears the clinkling resonance of the anklets in a mood of ever green glee; the negation of dualism between the seeker and the search, and the unison of the spirit of journey-man with the spirit of the Divine Destination mingle in the serene rise of the soundless Sound; and the juice of contentment pours down drenching and drowning the 'soulful' dancer in ecstasy. Nanak says: such is the nature and stuff of contentment : "you should go on dancing by fixing your feet firmly thus (in contentment)"[5]

Contentment thus originates in truthful living and ripens in to a fruit divine which serves as a powerful tonic to the spiritual

1. Nanak Vani, p. 494. Ram Kali. M. 1. Chaupada.
2. Ibid p. 343. Rag Asa M.1. Slokha.
3. Ibid p. 659 Rag Maru M.I. Sohalia.
4. Ibid., p. 250, Rag Gaudi Purbi, M.1.
5. Ibid.

health of the aspirant on the path of God-realisation. In this divine fruit lies the seed of a divine tree. In due course of time. when the aspirant's love of truth deepens and expresses itself in truthful living, the seed sprouts up and steadily grows into a fullsome tree, as the warmth of truth and water of love fertilize and irrigate it. Nanak clearly points out that "Contentment is a Divine Tree on which the fruit of 'Dharma' and the fruits of Knowledge grow (नानक गुरु सतोखि रुखु धरम फुलु फलु गिआनु); it remains ever green when watered by love (रसिया हरिया सदा)' [1] Thus Truth is the root of contentment and its constituents are love of truth and dharma i e., conscientiousness And a man of contentment is thus ever gay and cheerful, free as he is from the sickness of the soul, and the spiritual gaiety of this pure heart manifests itself in his moral strength of remaining satisfied with whatever material requisites destiny has placed at his disposal. He desires no more, for he desires Him who is the philosopher's touch stone (चिन्तामणि . the supreme satisfier of earthly needs without asking, the paramount panacea of all psychic ailments and anxieties the sovereign Bestower of the Bliss Divine. Contentment is a virtue as unfathomable as is the Truth itself Yet, persons there are who have had the vision of Truth and spoken of it variously, who have had their share of the ambrosial juice of contentment by enjoying ecstatic steadiness and perfect calm of the mind [2]

The contented mind alone has the courage to adopt and accommodate itself to every adverse circumstance, or calamitous change, be it poverty, distress, sickness or sorrow It welcomes the autumn and spring of life alike with equanimity, cheerfulness and gratitude. Every new misery, in the worldly sense, he embraces as a new mercy of the Lord. For, whatever happens, happens as per His Will, which every man of contentment takes as a gift of God to be relished. Contentment is thus the highest psychic stage of perfect clam and quietitude.

Thus, in Nanak's view, contentment is a fellow virtue of man's love of Truth. It is atonce a spiritual tonic, a moral support and a mental equipment to brave any odds in life with serenity of mind and cheerfulness of heart. As a spiritual tonic or driver it is 'dharma', and as a mental and moral equipment and support it is equanimity in action, the स्थितप्रज्ञ' of Srimad Bhagvadgita.

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 191. Rag Majh M 1. Sloks 38.
2. Padam Puran Scrastic Prakran 19/256. Quoted from Sant Vani, p. 52.

Continence or Self Control

Contentment is difficult to know, much more difficult to achieve. Contentment as a stage of perfect equanimity of mind which ever fills the heart with the bliss of gay eternal demands of us a tougher disciplining of our life. Approaches to contentment are very many, but none of them is very easy Some speak of non-attachment (असग) as a sure pathway to contentment; others speak of 'yoga' as a royal road leading to it; still others speak of the concentration of mind in solitude as the opener of the recesses of inner contentment. Nanak also speaks of the control of the mind and the senses, the taming of the ego, but emphasizes the unique significance of the chanting of God's name, and the grace of the Guru, as the sovereign way to contentment, the Paradise of Bliss. This Nanak calls 'Sajamu' i.e., continence. Continence as the highway of contentment is a purely spiritual activity on a higher plane and a praiseworthy moral activity on social plane. As a spiritual activity, continence is that subtle discipline which enables man in slowly and steadily demolishing the wall of arrogance which separates the 'self within' (jeevatma) and the 'Self all-pervading' (Paramatma) and stands between them; as also in bringing them first face to face together and then in establishing a happy union between them in an unbreakable and inseparable way. It is in the initial but most difficult step of dismantling the wall of arrongance that continence, which is nothing else than the 'bramacharya' of the Upanishads, generates the spiritual gunpowder of contentment. With the help of this spiritual explosive man blasts one after the other the hard rocks of the granitean Ego. Contentment is the spiritual energy which goes on multiplying as man goes on progressing in continence. More than the nuclear power, this spiritual energy in the form of contentment does three fold work the work of destruction, of preservation, and of construction on unthinkably grand scale. It can destroy the vast, impregnable and stupendous empire of ego; it can blast the subtle veil of Lie that hides the vision of Truth; and it can emancipate the self for ever from the suffocating fetters of womb. It can, on the other hand, construct the grandiose Paradise of Bliss spiritual, transport man besmeared with all his gross human stuff to the limitless expanse of soothing luminosity eternally divine, and re-lodge him for ever in the all preserving and unifying deliverance of the Lord. But it is a very tiring process and trying activity and many an aspirant's patience gives way mid-way. Very few reach the final point of distination and that, too, only when they follow the course of continence with love, austerity, and devotion to Truth.

This is the spiritual aspect of continence, which implies 'walking into divinity' i.e., brahmacharya. It is not mere celibacy or a state of marriagelessnesss, as is commonly supposed to be; Nanak's continence is higher and up above the catholic view of mere celibate life, for he does not preach the life of a monk or a recluse He wants man to lead the life of a householder, of course within the limits prescribed by the ideal of continence, which on the social plane implies all those activities of mind and body which tend to promote individual and social life of material and mental progress such as, daily bath, good neighbourliness, charity, acts of good will, social harmony, self-control, company of good people etc. Without the inculcation and promotion of these actions of mutual good and social well being, the human life on this planet will be, says Nanak, very dry, drab and a lifeless affair, as dead as a log of wood [1]

Continenc, on social plane, is the disciplining of m.n s role in society and its good and useful member. It keeps society in the centre and regulates the individual man's life and behaviour to suit the requirements of healthy social life, on the one hand, and individual human beings' serviceability to the needy, meritorious or unfortunate individuals so that the growth and development of corporate socio-economic and politico-cultural life and people can be facilitated unhampered, on the other. So also continence, on purely spiritual plane, keeps God in the centre and regulates the inner life of soulful man in such a way that his pathway of God-realisation is so well laid that he can in due course of time rise from the level of selfishness and contentment to that of selflessness and contentment; and this very level of contentment serves as a spring board for the aspiring seeker to take a jump, through Guru's Grace into the realm of higher truthful living where while hearing the soundless but sweet music and dance notes he may eventually loss himself for ever in the large; and liberating lap of Hari, the Almighty. It is this continence with which we are presently concerned, for it is both atonce moral and mystical in its orientation. Continence is self-restraints and self-control, not through penance but through a cautious self-possession and poise , says Dr. Trilochan Singh. To this may be added the prayerful meditation on the Name. In Japji 38, Nanak gives us five essentials of moral grounding for achieving the divine blessings of never-ending contentment; disciplining of the senses, conquest of passions, firmness of mind, inexhaustible patience and knowledge and love of Truth. In this memorable metaphorical hymn Nanak says : "self-control is smithy,

1. Nanak Vani, p. 222. Rag Ram Kali M.1.

patience the smith, understanding the anvil, wisdom the tools; the fear (of God) is the bellows, burning Austerity the fire, and love the crucible wherein you melt the nectar in (this) true Mint the (Guru's) word can be coined, (and this is) the work of those on whom (falls) the grace of (His) glance Nanak, from grace upon grace (comes) bliss Herein we find that continence by itself is not everything or enough. God's grace is necessary for the final asent or bliss. Good actions by way of self restraint are needed by the aspirant in his upward climb, but without Grace man's spiritual journey is incomplete. Not works alone, not Grace alone, but work deserving Grace and Grace enabling works are what count in spiritual life.

There is a negative side of continence also. To the list of the five positive virtues mentioned above, is to be added a list of four virtues of negative character in order to have complete view of Nanak's concept of continence as a moral preparation necessary for spirtiual pursuit. There are 'don'ts' and 'dos' in any document of Ethical conduct. In Nanak's Ethics of creative activism too continence has both these sides. A man on the path of self-restraint has also to know what is to be avoided. There are four negative values to be lived. Firstly, the attachment to epheremal objects is to be avoided. Through reflection the wise man seeks to discover, rather discern the permanent behind the temporary, passing and perishable and to withdraw his lure and infatuation of the latter. For example, men as individuals are born and die but society as an institution remains The selfishness and ego-centred interests of an individual should thus be avoided and sacrificed at the altar of the larger and selfless social good and harmony. Secondly, the temptatiors are to be avoided temptation of gold, beauty status, etc. use with temperance the articles of the world, but think of the Eternal Nanak says that there is no order so holy, nor place so secret, where there are no temptations; but all of them–power, position, self, sex–are tinsel. Avoid them not by flight from them but by fighting them with patience are true humanity, by using them as necessities of life; by praying God to enable us to overcome them Thirdly, the aspirant must avoid ego-centricism which curtains off the things of real and lasting value from his sight. Love of recognition, sense of personal merit, glory of achievement, pride of possessions are some of the things which add to ego-centricism and are to be guarded against. Fourthly, one should also avoid the company of the wicked. For the association's impact is proverbially inevitable and inescapable. The evil company cannot but evoke evil thoughts in the mind of the aspirant

and mar the progress of his moral preparation for his mystical pursuit."

In short, negatively speaking, continence consists in avoiding the four undesirables which hinder moral progress and thus retard man's upward spiritual climb too; and positively speaking, continence consists in taming the Ego, calming down the five (senses), fixity of mind on God, firmness of determination, longing for self-examination, and moderation, untiring, patient and loveful rememberance of God and repetition of His Name Truly, continence is a self imposed discipline of walking into divinity and with the orientation of that discipline it is a well regulated way of personal and social ethics, of playing one's role in society with love and fellowship and with due regard to the accepted norms of life so that one may contribute his own humble bit to the happy and harmonious growth of corporate life conducive to the moral and material well being and development of society. Without this continence as a moral preparation for spiritual life is a meaningless phrase, a sham, a non-entity.

Compassion, Charity and Service:

No moral preparation can be said to be complete unless the aspirant imbibes the virtues of compassion, charity and service. He who has God in his heart and godliness in action is not only a man of conscientiousness, contentment and continence, of purity simplicity and humility, of faith, fortitude and forgiveness but also a man who is kind, charitable and serviceable towards all living beings. For there are essential constituents of man's divine disposition, after the ideal pattern of God Himself. Who does not want that somebody should serve him in times of his need he is in distress or delusion and charitable to him when he is mistaken or guilty? A man should do unto others, for his own moral up bringing, what he wants others to do unto him.

This is the law of plain reciprocity in the moral world of the humans, observance where of qualifies man to enter the realm of spiritual life. This very moral law of reciprocity is subsumed into the spiritual law of love for all when the aspirant enters the mystical expance of a higher and subtler ground to tread. Till-then, the aspirant must cover atleast the broad moral grounds of good will which includes charity, compassion and serviceability to all.[1]

Compassion, to begin with, grows out of man's basic faith that light of God kindless in every soul[2] and that injury to any being

1. Nanak Vani, p. 276, Rag Asa, M.I.
2. Ibid., p. 275.

is an injury to God.[1] Compassion is kindness or mercy in action. In Japji Guru Nanak says that "it is the bull of righteousness born of mercy and contentment that is up holding the whole universe." Throughout Nanak's utterances where in one frequently comes across words 'daya' 'darad' 'karuna' mihir, which are indicative of the necessity of practising kindness towards the people, towards all living creatures of the world. The very 'Ardas' or prayer which every Sikh should make to God stresses the importance of goodwill or sympathetic attitude towards one and all. The miserables, the poor and the men and animals in unfortunate position or circumstance are the objects of man's kindness.

Where there is compaction of the heart and under-standing, there is charity. Charity is an activity of voluntary giving of alms or monetary help to the needy. People there are who give, but what counts in charitable giving is the heart of the giver. There are some who give for name or for receiving much more in return in the next birth. There are still others who give neither for recognition nor for show, nor for creating goodwill to seek certain ulterior ends, but only because their hearts melt down in face of the unbearable fire of anguish, sorrow and sufferings of the other people. They cannot but give little, much or every bit of what they have so that the pain or misery of the other ones may be all aviated. They give as Nature gives fragrance and sunshine. Through such givers of charity God smiles on earth and speaks to mankind. It should however, be brone in view that such deeds of charity are significant moral deeds only. Spiritual charity is of a high order; it consists in giving a 'divine insight' into the things and relations of the world, whereby man is enabled to live in the world without being worldly. Bhai Mani Singh writes in his 'Bhagat Ratnawali'. The highest charity is the awakening of spiritual consiousness in a person and imparting the love of God. The entire life of Nanak is both the essence and exam ple of the ideal virtue of charity.

Seva or service of humanity writes Dr. Trilochan Singh, forms half the practical side of Sikh Religion. To feed the hungry, to provide clothes to the naked and the needy, to tend the sick and the wounded is one aspect of Nanak's view of service. To serve the saints the Sadguru and the seekers of the Truth is the other and the more important aspect of it Service in both these aspects requires the spirit of dedication, the selfless pursuit of helping the needy realising that service to anyone is service to one's own-self. 'Cursed are the hand and feet that are not busy in serving the needy' is the

1. Nanak Vani., 284, Rag Asa. M.1. Astpadi.

heart of Nanak's practice of 'Service'. Service should become aspirant's second nature 'Besmear your body' says Guru Nanak, 'with the divine ash (vibhuti) of service.'[1] This moral serviceability of man becomes spiritual sadhana in due course of time as a result of God's Grace. Nanak's idea of service is based on the belief that spirituality, goodness and virtues are useless if they sink to the level of seeking personal salvation of the man only. Spirituality and enlightment should, on the contrary, inspire man to dedicate his life and genius to the service of humanity. When once Nanak visited a village full of notorious people, he cursed them by saying: 'May you live here for ever'. But when he reached another village which was full of virtuous people, he blessed them by saying: 'May you all be uprooted'. Nanak wanted virtue to spread through social activities of virtuous people and evil to be confined within as small a place as possible. "Thereby he also emphasized the ethics of creative enlightment", writes Dr. Trilochan Singh, "in-which he demanded that every enlightened person should cease to live for himself."[2]

Only the selfless can be serviceable, and only the soulful can be selfless. To be soulful and selfless one should follow the lotus way. The will to serve is the outcome of man's devotion to the Name. The service of the Lord accelerates the spiritual progress of man.

Longing, Contemplation and Devotion etc.

In a celebrated poem Nanak points out that without the keen longing (faith), contemplation and devotion no moral preparation for spiritual life can ever be completed Really, the virtues hither to discribed tend to a part of man's character only if he sincerely longs to make them so. Only the hungry runs after food He alone craves for virtues who, keenly wills to lead a righteous life 'Sradhavan Labhate Gyan' is a popular saying from the Gita, the celestial song, of Lord Krishna. It means: 'seeker gains wisdom'. Who else can? He who wills not, works not; and he who works not, gains not. Acquisition of wisdom has at its back unbending Will and incessant toil to get at wisdom. No sradha, no gyan. Sardha, therefore, opens the doorway to knowledge by emotionally charging the battery of man's mind to unidirectionally work for it. Nanak tells us in a metaphorical hymn[3] that 'Sradha' has in the making of the divine drink (of Name) the same place or importance which the furnance

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 278. Rag Asa M.1.
2. Guru Nanak. His Life Time and Teaching, p. 97 Edited by Gurumukh Nihal Singh.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 276, Rag Asa M.1. Sabad.

has in the distillation of wine. Both the drinks are intoxicating to the point of maddening man, but both need furnace for their distillation. Sradha is the spiritual furnace for manufacturing the celestial juice, 'Hari rasa', says Nanak.[1]

In this work of spiritual distillation furnace is an inevitable thing, without the help or contribution of 'dhian' (contemplation) and loveful devotion, nothing can be distilled. Three things other than the furnace are equally indispensable; the jagree of wisdom; the mahua of contemplation; and the baboolbark of good conduct.[2] Up above the furnace is to be fixed up the utensil of the heart. In this utensil are to be mixed up these three things. Let the furnace burn and the things boil and steam up Cover the utensil with lid of love in such a way the potion of devotional clay surrounded by the cooling effects of a wet cloth of efforts that the essence is steamed up trickling in the form of distilled ambrosial drink.

Nanak exhorts man to have 'sardha' do 'dhian' and develop 'bhakti' so that he may be able to prepare and drink the celestial juice. Hari Rasa, and attain to the peace eternal. Here devotion and not emancipation, is what Nanak emphasizes.[3] Say Dr Jai Ram Misra. In short, it is the experience and the enlightened belief of Nanak that all moral and spiritual life begins in sraddha and ends in bhakti through the tunnel of dhian.

So Nanak addresses up on the aspirant the great necessity of leading a moral or virtuous life in order to be able to enter the spiritual realm and climb up the ecstatic heights of self-knowledge and God-realisation. He accosts the aspirant and inspiringly tells him:

"Regard the body as the farm, thy actions as the seed, and saring pani (whose hands' hold the earth, the water to irrigate it).

Let thy mind be its farmer; let God be enseated in thy heart; thus shall you attain the nirvan, salvation what for do you pride in, O, you fool, in Maya (1) (the goddess of worldliness) ?

None in the end will come to your rescue neither the father, nor the mother, nor wife nor sons (Pause). Weed out the wicked evil and perversions and renounce them; and let thy soul meditate introspectively; And when thou practise continence, austerity and contemplation.

Thy Lotus out flowers and the Honey drips into thee (2).

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 276. Rag Asa M.1. Sabad.
2. Ibid.
3. Guru Granth Darshan—by Jai Ram Mishra, p. 324 M.4. (b) Nanak Vani, p. 276. Asa Rag M.1. Sabad.

Gather thy body, the conglomeration of the twenty and the seven; and remember Death in all the three stages. And see not but Transcendant He in the ten and the eighteen. Thus will He Ek bestow deliverance on you [1]

This is the lotus way, Those who follow it with love, devotion and sincerity attain to the supreme status of Godhood. For life in the Lotus way is life in God. Like the lotus in water, the lotus way farer lives in the world without being worldly. He emits fragrance to refresh all and attracts them thereby on the path of the lotus love. He blooms in to the sunshine of spirituality and becons people thereby to be the Lotus way farers. The lotus way is the way to God-wardness. It begins with the inspiration from God; it is processed by His Mercy through the spiritually oriented moral disciplining of the human senses; and it culminates in the amalgamation of 'jeevatma', the lotus way farer, with 'Parmatma', the divine Finale of the lotus way. Man's journeys on the lotus way is fraught with the danger of man's derailment from the moral path. He has to fight the five lower passions with wisdom and spiritual effort and go beyond a mere virtuous life For, the lotus way is founded on the belief that morality is necessary as a pre-requisite to spiritual perfection but mere virtuosity can not lead to it. The spiritual plane is higher than the moral plane, though no one can acquire spiritual illumination without acquiring moral purity. The lotus way farer is thus hard to himself and soft to others harc[2] in not allowing himself the slightest deviation from his ride over passions, and soft to others because of his belief that in all of them kindles the same divine light which is enshrined in his own heart. Out of the moral tightening of the senses flow two things in full swing; the falling flat of the ego, and the cozingout from th s surrender a spiritual closeness and kinship of soul with God in an invisibly imperishable bond. That is why though the Lotus wayfarer lives in the world, he remains pure of heart with mind uncontaminated and undefiled by the ways of the worldly beings. This is the way of the lotus-hearted people, who through Guru's Word and Grace are God-bound and God-intoxicated.

Only they who follow the lotus way are the true yogis, true musalmans, true fakirs and true brahmins, true udasis, true Avadhuts true Pakhandis (one sect), truc householders nay, they alone are the men who have grasped the true essence of life and saved

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 125. Sri Rag M.1.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 546. Ram Kali M. 1. Gidh Ghost.

their life from being wasted. Those who waste their life are, says Nanak, the Frog Wayfarers, the denizens of the Kingdom of Ego.

The Frog Way :

The frog way is the way of the Ego, I-ness and the four streams of fire. It is the pathway to worldliness chalked out by 'haume' of the self-willed man. 'Haume' is the root of this way; and the continuo changing of raiments by the soul, birth after birth, is its fruit. Unlike the 'lotus way', which is the pathway to God and salvation, the 'frog way' is the pathway to suffering and transmigration. To understand this way we should go to its root 'haume'.

'Haume' according to Guru Nanak is neither the 'ego' in Freudian sense, nor 'Sin' in the christian theo logical sense, nor 'ahankar' in the Vedantic sense,[1] as pointed out by W.H. McLeod. It is, according to Nanak, that state of mind which emerges out of man's forgetfulness of God and enters, as a result of this forgetfulness into the realm of self-centredness, i.e., haume. A man of 'haume' is a self-centred and self-willed man as opposed to a man who is God-centred and Guru-willed. Offered truth, freedom and life, he chooses instead falsehood, bondage and death, for such is the fate of a man who has not uprooted haume from his mind.[2] Nanak says :

"In haume he comes and in haume he goes;
In haume he is born and in haume he dies;
In haume he gives and in haume he takes;
In haume he acquires and in haume he castes away;
In haume he is truthful and in haume lies;
In haume he pays regard sometimes to virtue and sometime to evil......"[3]

All thinking, feeling and doing of activities by man in this condition of mind lead him to suffering through the carnal pleasures of life Acts done under the spell of 'haume' or I-ness yield man the denizenship of the empire of evil. The result of all this is that the pathway to salvation is hidden from man's sight and his journey into hell down the moral hill is protracted. There he falls into the rut of the rounds of births and deaths and remains there aflamed in the burning fires of wrath, lust, greed, covetuousness and pride

1. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp. 182-183—by W.H. McLeod.
2. Nanak Vani, p 291, Rag Asha. M.1, Astpadi.
3. Ibid., p. 334 Var Asha M.1. Pauri 7.

till he recovers his memory of God and is again well set on the Lotus way, the pathway to divinity and deliverance. To be precise, the Frogway is the way of Evil impulses which entice man into the snares of Maya says Nanak. He says :

"(In haume) he fails to perceive the true nature of salvation In haume there is Maya and its shadow (which is doubt).

By acting in accordance with haume he causes himself to be born again and again. If he understands his haume he perceives the door (of salvation), but without understanding he argues and disputes. In accordance with the divine order (Hukam) our 'Karma' is inscribed He who discerns the nature of the divine order discerns his haume also.[1]

This I-ness of the self-willed, unregenerate man is the most formidable of all the obstacles on the path of man's moral regeneration for his spiritual journey into Godhood.[2] This I-ness which expresses itself, violently or silently, into the passionate desire of man to gratify his baser instincts of lust, greed, pride and anger takes various forms out of which seven, according to Nanak, are noteworthy. These seven forms or faces of 'self-willedness' or are : (1) Religious and spiritual Ego.[3] (2) Academic ego;[4] (3) Sacrificial or scramental ego,[5] (4) Caste ego,[6] (5) Family Ego;[7] (6) Economic ego,[8] and (7) ego born of one's youth, strength and beauty [9] All these manifestations of the self-pride pull man down and lead him on the career of vices-lust (kama), wrath fivewheeled (Krodha), pride (mada), attachment (moha) and greed (lobha)—to the cycle of birth and death. Guru Nanak speaks of these vices thus : "The pleasure of Gold, the pleasure of silver, the pleasure of women and the scent of perfume, the pleasure of horses, the pleasure of the couch and the palace, the pleasure of sweets, the pleasure of body, how can the true Name find a dwelling in the heart ?" The body clings close to the carnal pleasures of the senses and the mind thinks that these pleasures of the world are the be-all and end-all of all life. This thinking is responsible for sorrow and suffering, for at the root of all the pleasures lies the Desire, the very non-satisfaction or non-

1. Adi Guru Granth Sahib, p. 466, Var Asa Solok of Pauri 7. Astapadi.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 227, Rag Gaudi M 1. Astapadi.
3. Ibid., p. 335, Asa divar M.1.
4. Ibid., p. 336, Asa divar M.1.
5. Nanak Vani, p. 336 Asa divar M.1.
6. Ibid , p. 248, Rag Asa. M.1. Sabad. 3.
7. Ibid., p. 291 Asa M 1. Astpadi 10.
8. Ibid., p. 158. Sri Rag M.1. Astapadi 16.
9. Ibid , p. 768. Rag Malar Var M.1.

fulfilment whereof heightens up axiety and pain. A slave of passions is a victim of worldliness. Emancipation from the prison of passions is effected through the observance of the Lotus way discipline in life.

None can get happiness by indulging in the passions-lust, anger, infatuation, conceit etc. In the fire of desire, the whole world is being consumed. Why not then quench the desire by loveful chantings of the Name? To desire God alone is to be free from desire and desirelessness is a way to peace, fellowship and harmony of soul. But, who follows the lotus way and who does not want to follow the frag way? The former is too difficult for worldly man to follow, and the latter is too convenient and pleasurable to ignore. Both these ways are however the products of God Himself. He is the author of delusion and duality on the one hand, and of divinity and deliverance, on the other. In the Dawn hymns, the Asa divar, Guru Nanak says: "God Himself created the creation and gave currency to the Name; and then a sumed a second nature and with pleasure regarded his creation seated on His pray mat "[1] And it is God who having set the world and life into motion, threw in it as it were 'Moh Thaguli', a pill that thugs used in order to get their victims under the influence of the opiate before they robbed them "

Precisely, God Himself gave us the pill of falsehood (Amul gagola kud ka dita davanhar). "Having eaten this pill we forget Death and God Consequently, we indulge in sensuality and go the way of the flesh. We forget that life is a festival of four days. Instead of remembering our creator we curse Him and sink into the carnal pleasures of life. Instead of regarding the short duration of life a festival of divine play or devotion, we reduce it into a carnival of sensuous pursuits; countless people go the way of the senses, 'the frogway'.

Very few go the Lotus way of moderation and abstience, find truth and enter the court of God Both the good and the bad, truth and falsehood, the lotus way and the frogway emanate from God. Man's role is to choose the one and avoid the other. Nanak says that the Angels of Divine court maintain a record of the activities of man; the good and virtuous actions are entered in the credit side and bad or evil activities in the debit side. This Document of the deeds is a true balance sheet of man's vices and virtues. According to good or bad done by man in his life, he has to, as per divine

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1. Nanak Vani, p 324, Asa Divar M.1.

order, enjoy or suffer a heavenly or hellish state in life. Those men and women who follow the lotus way and obey the ordinances of God (Hukam Rejai chalana) and earn His Grace (nadar) attain to the highest status of God-realization (parampad). It is for this reason that Nanak lays great stress upon the necessity of moral preparation for man's mystical journey inspired by union of spirit, of oneness of God and creation. Nanak says:

> The world is our play ground, our acts
> right and wrong at thy court shall
> come to judgment. Some be seated near
> Thy seat, some kept distant. The toils
> have ended those that have worshipped
> Thee.
>
> O, Nanak, their faces are lit with
> joyful radiance many others they
> set free."[1]

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1. Hymn of Guru Nanak. p. 62. Translated by Kushwant Singh.

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The Mystical Journey

All Morality must originate in love of God and end in God realisation:

Moral grounding for mystical life is certainly of value and great personal and social significance, but it is not in the least the stuff of which spirituality is made. Spiritual life, by its own essence, is moral life par excellence but the converse is not at all true. For, moral life is possible even without faith in God, but spiritual life without such faith is a plain impossibility. Mere moral life, though essential and useful, is not enough; it must needs be refreshed and replenished by man's love and intense devotion to God, if it is to equip him to climb up the high mystical hills of God realisation. All morality must originate in love of God and culminate in God-realisation.

In tense yearning for God, the pre-condition of the Mystical Journey:

Man's mystical journey begins only when he has robust faith in the existence of God and intense yearing to realise Him at the same time. A simple belief that 'God is' is not enough. There must sprout in man's heart a burning zeal and keen urgency to search Him out, know Him and ultimately be one with Him. Love of God must be backed by hunger of God-realisation. 'Thirst for the vision of God' is, says Nanak, the first pre-requisite for any man desirous of undertaking the Mystical journey of reaching the Supreme. This "burning thirst for God"[1] is thus the spiritual incentive in action and constitutes the principal motive force for man setting out on the pilgrimage to God.

Need for God and Belief in Guru:

Furrowing the Soil:

Meaning of mystical journey:

Let it be said at the very outset that this longing for God far transcends man's mere desire for 'mukti' and is coterminus with the perfect union of the soul in the finite form with the soul Eternal, or with the final 'union of the Bride with the Bride groom'[2] as

1. The Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib, p. 174—by Duncan Greenless.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 241. Rag Gaudi Purbi M. 1.

Nanak calls it. Between the anguishful aspiration to have the glimpse of God and the blissful at one ment with Him is a long and ardous, process, generally known in spiritual parlance as the Mystical Journey. This journey from 'vismrti' and 'viyoga' (forgetfulness and separation from God) to 'Smrti' and 'Samyoga' (Rememberance and Reunion with God) is not at all possible without the grace and guidance of Guru i e , the Spiritual Teacher.

The imperative Need of the Guru for God-realisation:

Mere aspiration to realise God, though of utmost necessity, is not at all an adequate pre-requisite in itself. For God does not come Himself, but sends His servants time and again to lead the aspirant aright on the path of happy 're-union'. Man has to reach Him, the indwelling and the inmost spirit, but he connot do so without God's will expressed through the Grace of the Guru who acts as a bridge between the aspiring soul and the soul Eternal, between the devotee and the Lord, between the Pilgrim and the Param Purusha. "The world is like an ocean" and "it can be crossed (only) with the grace of the Guru",[1] says Nanak. The sea of worldliness is indeed rough and dreadful; only he whom God blesses can cross it and reach the shoreless shores of God-realisation. The Lord's love does not come to anybody how so ever eagerly one may long for it for long till the Grace of the Guru touches one's soul and awakens it from the age-long slumber of 'forgetfulness'. For the cup of love is in the hand of the Guru, and He gives it to whomsoever He pleases to give. As Nanak Deva says[2] ' His Grace is for all, But giveth He to him whom He willeth" He says elsewhere: "without the true Gure, there is no realisation,[3] all is sunk in illusion and blindness, darkness of doubts and ignorance. And, as the second Guru says in Asa Raga: "If a hundred moons were to come out, And a thousand Suns were to rise, Inspite of all the illumination, All would be pitch dark without the Guru "[4]

Speaking of the supreme necessity of the Guru as a 'ferryman' to lead the aspirant "across to salvation",[5] Nanak sings in the Sri Raga: "without the Guru to guide me I shall not find my way."[6] So says the great mystic poet Kabir in the famous devotional song "'गुरु बिन कौन बतावे बाट' :[7] who else than the Guru can show the

1. The Message of Sikhism, p. 49. Guru 1, Shalokas by Harbans Singh.
2. Message of Sikhism p. 51. Guru 1 Sri Raga
3. Ibid., p. 54. Guru 1 Prabhati—by Harbans Singh.
4. Ibid.
5. Hymns of Guru Nanak, p. 174 Siddha Ghosti --by Kushwant Singh.
6. Ibid p. 83. Sidh Ghost—by Kushwant Singh.
7 Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p. 136—R. D. Ranade.

wayout of the tumultous sea of sorrows and sufferings ? Maulana Rumi, a Muslim divine says: "If you intend going in for a pilgrimage (to the Divine), take with you one who has already pilgrimaged."[1]

For, he who has known the way and himself travelled and established his identity with the Almighty is alone capable of showing to others the way and the vision of God. Such God-realised soul is the Saint, the God-man, whose grace and blessings alone have the power of putting the true aspirant on the True path. Whosoever wishes to see a king, the Wise men say, must first seek the company of one who is the favourite of the king. Whose ever is aching to see the Lord," says Nanak, "let him seek one who has become one with Him "[2] Only through and by the Grace of the Guru the longing soul can enter God's house; not otherwise. No Guru, no journey into God-head. The mystical journey begins only when the Guru has transformed the aspirant into a pilgrim by giving him the divine Name "Let no man in the world live in delusion," sing out the Fifth Guru, "without a God-man, none can cross over to the other shore." Says Nanak: "Those who have not met personally true Gure are unfortunate and in the power (or clutches) of time; again and again they wander into the womb and are placed in appaling filth [3] For ages and ages through birth after birth of Wandering, the soul has sought for happiness in this welter of human things, never realising the real joy can be found only in the one source of Bliss Himself-until atleast the true teacher comes to him, and the long search is ended in rapturous vision of the Beloved Lord. It is He who in His wisdom caused that sad wandering,[4] so that the 'restless longing' might grow to fever heat, until the soul could melt and dissolve in its love for Him.

Blessed indeed is, therefore, the man who has found the true Guru. For it is only the Guru who initiates the longing hearts into the Mystic Way, the path of God realisation. Certainly, indeed, the aspirant needs the 'awakening word' of the Real Teacher-Sadguru-to be able to take even the very first step on the long road of spiritual journey. And, thereafter, the power of the Sadguru, the force of the deep and hearty meditation on the Name imparted by the Sadguru and Grace of God will undoubtedly carry the aspiring pilgrim

1. The Japji, p. 81, by Kirpal Singh.
2. Ibid., p. 82.
3. Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib, (Sri Raga M.2, 2.3), by Duncan Greenless, p. 61.
4. Ibid , (AD Gujari Var M. 3.13 Sl. 2).

aright to the divine destination of God realisation of union of the Soul with God.

Where is one to find the Guru ?

But the question arises: where is such a spiritual Teacher to be found? To this seem two answers: one, when God wills (the man) meets the real Guru';[1] applies himself to the service of a Saint on whose brow this destiny in written;[2] and 'lovingly serves the Guru to whom the Lord has shown kindness'.[3] Second, God lets one meet the Guru according to his past earnings':[4] 'without the help of a Saint God's companionship' can not be gained-there is no love without the devotion to the Guru, nor does a saint give his company without the Guru'.[5] In both these answers the essential theme is one: the will of God: and the will of God can be invoked by 'earnings', by meritorious deeds and by real good craving for the vision of God. The silent yell and the yearing of the restless heart is of essence in moving the Unmoved, invoking the will of the Unwilled Willer. God assumes the role of Guru and appears before the aspirant in ways and forms He chooses to take: He may come in the form of Light or Sound as in the case of the warrior General Saul, the pitiless persecutor of Christians, who was immediately, rather instantaneously converted in to Saint Paul, a great follower of Lord Christ. Or, He may appear in the human form of a Saint to deliver His word to the aspiring soul and set him right on the path of self realisation, self fulfilment and self-perfection. He may also come in the form of pure word by constantly hearing which with love, awe and regard, the aspiring individual is enabled to efface his separateness from God, to identify himself with the Eternal Self and ultimately to grow into the blissful unison with Him for ever. He may appear in any other form in person during dream or meditation and quench the thirst of the needy and carve for him the path of Name-Name which is none other than God or Guru incarnate in sound, the Word Precisely speaking, one need not go to distant hills or dense woods in search of a Guru; need not waste one's precious life in hunting the doors of pundits or pilgrim centres in the vain hope of getting a path shower; one must needs to simply sit at home in deep silence with a burning sense of seeking God, like

1. The Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib (K. Kedara 4:3), p. 87.-by Duncun Greenless.
2. Ibid., p. 88 (Ar. Todi 8:2).
3. Ibid , (Ar. Belawal 4.1).
4. Ibid., p. 89 (N. Ram Kali Astapadi 4:5).
5, Ibid., p. 90 (N. Basanta 5:2).

a fish out of water, and, lo, the Guru would be there. He 'will' appear in one form or the other, give the cup of Nectar (Name) to drink incessantly at it, and thus give the aspirer, whenever needed, apt strength and insight to go ahead on his spiritual journey.

Who was the Guru of Guru Nanak ?

Only incidentally, it may be relevant to dwell here on the question of Nanak's own Guru There is no documentary evidence neither in Guru 'Granth Sahib.' the only authentic holy scripture of the Sikhs, nor in the 'janam sakhis' of Nanak Deva-to show who, if any, was-the spiritual Teacher of Nanak ? Nor has Nanak himself left any personal testimony on the basis of which the name of his Teacher can be to'd [1] What ever is available to know in this regard is the only one single anecdote of Nanak's life which tells us about the Mysterious disappearance of Nanak in the waters of the river Bein, near Sultanpur and his re-appearance after three complete days, duly changed and divinely drunk in the Name of God. Speaking of this wonderful event, which is the great turning point in his life, Nanaki, the sister of Nanak, is understood to have said: "My brother can never be drowned, for he is indeed the saviour of the drowning ones."[2] People laughed at her but when Nanak re-appeared from the deep of the waters after three days of remaining there, people had nothing to disbelieve. Nanak came back drunk deep in the divine lore of the Guru and whatever he spoke thereafter, is nothing but the glorification of his Guru's grace. In order to know who this Guru of Nanak Deva was it is essential to keep in view the known details of the said event.

The Anecdote of Nanak's disappearance in the River and re-appearance after three days.

It is reported that on the third night preceding the Full Moon in August 1507, Nanak went to the river bank as usual, followed by his servant, in the very early hours of the morning. He took off

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1. "There are some Kabirites, however, who are fond of describing Nanak as the initiated disciple of Saint Kabir. They cite in evidence the following couplet":
   नानक के सशय गये जब सतगुरू मिला कबीर ।
   But no Sikh literature, no Sikh Gurus, and no Jnanis-have anything to corroborate it. The couplet is thus fit to be brushed aside as unauthentic and unreliable-The author.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 818 by Jai Ram Mishra.

his shirt,(Kurta) and the under linen (dhoti) and stepped into the stream. As was his wont, he closed his nose with his fingers and ducked under the water. But then he was not seen by the servant coming up from water again. So the servant ran up and down the bank shouting for Nanak. He could only hear, sog oes the anecdote, a strange voice from the waters say, "Don't lose patience". He waited there fearfully and restlessly till the day break when everything was clearly visible along the riverside. With the first ray of Sun on the horizon, he ran back home crying in utter agony and sobbed out the episode to Nanak's relatives and friends. There was pell-mell every where both in the house hold and the town (Sultanpur) Daulat Khan Lodhi, the Chief, ordered the search of the waters and himself supervised all human efforts to fork out Nanak's body from the river. No nook of the two and a half mile long river bottom was left unsearched, but all proved vain. The search was given up with the impression that Nanak was drowned, dead and irrecoverable.

Meanwhile, Nanak, who had gone under water was conducted to the presence of the Almighty Nanak made his obeisance. The Almighty gave him a bowl of milk and commanded: "Nanak! Drink this bowl. It is not milk as it may seem! This is nectar. It will endow thee with the gift of prayer, love of worship; truth, contentment and restraint." Nanak drank the cup and was overcome. He made another obeisance and fell prostrate at the feet of the Creator. The Almighty then blessed him: "I release thee from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth; he that sets his eyes on you with faith will be saved. He that hears your words with conviction will be saved; he that calls on you for succour will be helped by me I grant thee salvation. Nanak, go back to the evil world and teach men and women to pray (Naam), to give in charity Dan) and to live clean, wholesome lives (Snan). Show the godly path to the people. Do good to the world and redeem it in the Age of Sin-Kaliyoga.[1]

Having had the happy communion with God for three days Nanak re-emerged from waters of the Bein on the Full Moon day of Bhadon Samvat 1564. That day Nanak was thirty eight years past six month and fifteen days On his re appearance and return to his house when he gave away in gift all his belongings to the poor and the needy one by one and finally gave away even his cloths except the loin cloth and went out of the town to join the band of hermits

1. Janam Sakhi Sodhi Meherban. pp. 88-89-quoted by Santa Sarbject Singh in her book "Nanak the Guru", p. 49.

who lived there, people called him "possessed", "mad", and "mentally deranged." To all such ones Nanak replied: "It is the Lord who has possessed me and made me mad; if I find merit in the eyes of my Lord: then will I have justified my waywardness''. God is thus Nanak's Guru and none else.

Ordinarily it is very difficult to put one's trust in God being thus the Guru of Nanak Deva. For, could it be, and for that purpose, can it be possible for a human being to remain in the depths of the river undiscovered and unflown for three consecutive days ? And, then in the case of Nanak, where was the necessity of performing such a physical or yogic feat whereabout he not only makes any boastful or gentle mention but reprimands the yogis for such feats and rightly exhorts them to meditate on the Name of God for the real Bliss and blessedness of life. The failure of the day long thorough search to fork out Nanak from the lap of the Bein is enough suggestive. It is just possible that Nanak must have found it very necessary to go away from the humdrum of Sultanpur, far away from the reach of Daulat Khan Lodhi at whose court he worked where, in lone solitude, he could sit in deep meditation and contemplate on the vision of God undisturbed by any. For, the life of brooding and inwardness which he had been long leading at home must not have been sufficient to slake his thirst for God-realisation. His longing heart must have bitterly wept and panted feverishly to see God face to face. So he must have decided to make good the opportunity provided by his daily routine of going early morning for the river bath; he must have crossed the river to the other side leaving his shirt etc., on the bank side lies and must have shut himself in a very distant and unhaunted and unapprehensible sequestered place for his desired meditation. And when during the course of meditation done with love and burning zeal to have the sight of the Lord, God descended on his inward gaze, offered him the ambrosea to drink from His cup, commanded him to go back to teach and redeem the erring huminity, Nanak must have returned home by crossing the river in very early hours before the dawn. If this be so, God's vision and God's word transformed Nanak beyond imagination and h s townsmen failed to divine that Nanak was maddened only in the blissful experience of God. How could they, caught in the snares of Maya or deceptive intellect as they were ? It may also be argued that Nanak might have had the vision of God and His communion not in the wakeful moments of meditation but during sleep in a dream. A dip in the river for three days may be suggestive of a dip in the region of slumber The intent of the dip must needs be to come out duly 'awakened' from the depths of the slumber; to be re-

born in the lap of the Guru; to be spiritually impregnated by the power of the Word. It is waking up into spiritual light and getting out of the material region of ignorance. It is to be 'dwija', a wice-born Be what it may, it is useful for a devotee of God to give more credence to the greater possibility of Nanak's presence in the court of the Almighty during the moments of meditational trance. In any case, Nanak heard the voice of God and had His vision without any intermediary agency. With faith and love, and enormity of joy and gratitude Nanak returned home deeply absorbed in the contemplation of God who sang through him His own glory grandeur and greatness. Gracious God Himself was the Guru of Nanak Deva. He appeared in the form of Word, the inner, unending Music during the course of Nanak's meditational trance. This Word can in no way be other than the syllable 'Om', for it is with this very Name that the 'Mystical Rubric' of Nanak begins. Every meditational song is always preceded by Nanak's beloved and experiential idiom "Ik Onkar Sat Guru Prasad." Quite clearly thus IK Onkar is the word received as the gracious gift from the Sadguru Nanak was often asked if he acknowledged any one as is his own Guru "Yes, he replied, from the day breath came into my body the divine Word has been my guru; I endeavour to make my senses serve Him as if they were His disciples."[1]

The power of the Guru:

It does not mean that those who, like Nanak, have realised God are not to be regarded as Gurus. All saints who have realised God are potential Gurus; they bless the inquisitive and aspiring lovers of God individually as per God's commands. Nanak himself is hailed as Guru, as Shankeracharya, Kabir and several other Saints have been before and after him The Gurus are the 'light bearers' to mankind, the messengers of the timeless and Eternal He, the guardians of the inner values who correct the fanaticisms of their supperstitious followers. All illumination and perfection is in them. All that is good and excellent is in these Godmen. Each one of such saints of the purest ray serene is a polarized God, a pole from which the power of God works in the world. They have the Sun of Divinity hidden in them behind their flesh and bones They are the Music of the Eternal song. They manifest the Eternal song within us and make it audible to us. "The word of the Guru", says Nanak "is the inner Music; the highest Scripture and the all pervading Beauty"[2] "The Guru is Siva, the Guru is Vishnu and Brahma, the

1. Hymn of Guru Nanak, p. 32—Dr. Kushwant Singh.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 81. Japji 5. Stanza 4.

Guru is the Mother Goddess. If I know Him as truly as He is," Nanak says further, "what words could utter my knowledge ?[1] The greatness of the Guru, even if known, can not be described by mortal eloquence Indescribable indeed is the power of the Guru. All saints have spoken of the Guru in this very attribute. He is ever more than all the descriptions of Him given by all the saints in all the ages. All His revelations are a sure pointer to the ineffability of His power, grace and greatness No description can epitome His power, adore His majesty and eulogize His essence adequately. How rightly and beautifully does the great Saint Jnaneswar say: "Is it possible to add lustre to the Sun? Is it possible to crown the Kalpataru with flowers ? Is it possible to add a scent to camphor ? How can the sandal tree be made more fragrant? How can nectar be redressed for meals? How can one add a hue to the pearl? or what is the propriety of giving a silver polish to gold ? It is better that one should remain silent, and silently bow to the feet of Master."[2]

Only when the aspirant seeks the company of such a saint, sits calmly at his feet and makes a fervent and earnest appeal to the saint as a result of his or her heart-rending yearing for God whom he or she should approach in awe and humility, with love and reverence, the saint may, if and when God wills, pass on His word to the aspirant and instruct him in the science of communion with the Lord through the 'Surat Shabda Yoga', the yoga of the sound current, the mode of God realisation as practised and prescribed by Guru Nanak. Nanak insists that those who would seek God absolutely must take a Guru, but he comforts men by saying that when they are ready for such he will certainly appear. It is by ordinary goodness in our daily life, by the faithful discharge of our duties, by longing for God in particular that men are made ready for the Teacher, whom God sends the moment the aspirant can benefit from His teaching. Few really desire that teaching; blessed indeed are those few merely by their intense craving for God. Rare indeed are they (like Nanak, St. Paul etc.) whom God Himself gives love.[3]

So the intense longing for God is the basic, the first and foremost thing for any aspirant of spiritual life. It is the 'need for God' that matters, for it is this heartful need that serves to furrow the aspirant's emotional soil within and makes it ready to gainfully take in the seed of spirituality which God may sow there

1. Nanak Vani, p. 81, Japji 5. Stanza 4.
2. Jnaneswari X 9-15 taken from Prof. R.D. Ranade's "Mysticism in Maharastra pp. 49-50.
3. The Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib, p. 124. (Ar. Gond 17-3) Duncun Greenless.

through His messenger, the Guru, in the form of Name or Word. Nanak says that he who wants for the sight of God must necessarily believe in Guru, for without him there is no illumination, no vision Divine, no salvation. Without the Guru there is no spiritual life. 'God's light is discerned only through the grace of the Guru,"[1] sings Nanak Deva the lore Eternal. And the grace of the Guru blesses the yearning soul, when it is ready, as per God's will. So, faith in Guru is the surest gateway to Godhood "Everybody else is subject to error; only the Guru and God are flawless," says Nanak.[2] He further sings out: "The Guru is Beneficent, the sanctuary of peace. The Guru is Light of the whole universe. He is the Eternal Being. O Nanak, whoever believes in Him with his whole heart, attaineth peace."[3]

Trust in Guru

Implicit in this divine, musical utterance of Nanak is a qualification of one's belief in Guru. Mere or mixed belief is not at all wanted; what is needed of the aspirant is a belief in the Guru "with his whole heart", an undiluted and absolute trust in the Guru. The meaning of this complete and pure trust is that the need for God and the belief in Guru must not be regarded as means to worldly prosperity though that too might come and flood a devotee's life, but it must be taken only as the noblest means for God-realisation. The imperishable God and the Guru-it is expected of a true aspirant, and true aspirants are a rarity-must be hailed as the gracious source of the imperishable joy and everlasting peace only. Seek God alone and have firm faith in Guru. That is indeed the real intent and purport of Nanak's meditational music mentioned above.

To recount or recapitulate: the heartful need for God and absolute faith in the Guru are the first two inevitabilities of the aspirants of spiritual journey. Speaking of the need of a spiritual Guide, Dr. Kushwant Singh says in his valuable book "Hymns of Guru Nanak"[4] that "without the Guru as a guide, insists Nanak, no one can attain 'moksha', release"[5] The Guru keeps you on the straight and narrow path of truth; he is the God-stick which keeps man who is like a rogue elephant from running amock; he applies the salve of knowledge, 'guru anjan', to your eyes so that you can see the truth that is God." The Guru is indeed the divine ferryman

1. Message of Sikhism, p. 55. Guru I. Rag Dhansari-by Harbans Singh.
2. Ibid , Guru I. Sri Rag.
3. Ibid., p. 58. Guru I. Rag Majh.
4. Hymns of Guru Nanak, Kushwant Singh, pp. 31-32.
5. Adi Granth, p. 1040. "गुरु बिन मोख क्यो पाहू योहू" Hymns of Guru Nanak p. 31.

who ferries us across the rough, roaring and fearful ocean of life- the 'Bhav Sagar'. It is only he who interprets the ordinances of God and shows us the difference between the genuine and counterfeit. 'Hukmai bujhai tat pahchanai Eh prasad Guru tey janai',[1] i.e. to know His will, to discern the Truth; these we learn through the grace of the Guru. The fifth verse of Japji states:

Guru's Word is the highest type of knowledge:

"The Guru's word has the sage's wisdom, The Guru's word is full of learning. For though it be the Guru's Word, God Himself speaks therein." That is why Guru Nanak says "Pothi Parameshwar ka Than"-the Holy Scripture is the Abode of God. In brief, God can be known by the Grace of the Guru and the Guru can be met only by God's grace. Grace, which is everflowing, may flow into the intensely longing heart only when God, the Gracer, wills. The only merit which the aspiring soul should develop is the burning thirst for God and absolute faith in the Guru. This is necessary for sowing the seed of spiritual life. By implication, 'a life of inertia, can lead no where and God helps those who help themselves·

"No doubt", writes Kirpal Singh annotating the verse five of the Japji, "salvation is achieved only through Grace, yet one must make one-self worthy of the same. And the only way to make one-self worthy is by following the path taught by a true Master."[2]

For did not Jesus Christ tell: "Follow me and thou shalt be saved?" What greater guarantee a devotee needs! Long before Christ, Lord Krishna held out the same guarantee when he said: "Mam Ekam Saranam Vraj: Aham Twam Sarva Papebhyo Mokshayishyami Ma Suchah" i e. Seek only my shelter: I shall liberate thee from all aberrations (Sins); fear not. What is thus of utmost importance is to follow the Master, to do as He bids, firmly believing that to follow Guru is to find God and to serve the Teacher in human form is to please the Formless Almighty. For, in all intent and purpose, the Guru and God are essentially and ultimately one, not separate and two. As Nanak clearly points out:

ततु निरंजनु जोति सबाई सोहं भेद न कोई जीउ ।
अपरंपार पारब्रह्म परमेसरू नानक गुरु मितिया सोई जीउ"[3] ॥

The thing most noteworthy in this regard, however, is to finally understand that the Guru is to be loved, respected and obeyed; he is not to be worshipped. For the worship of the body is not the same thing as worship of the Atman.

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1. Adi Granth, p. 1288. Rag Malhar ki Var.
2. The Japji, p. 131-by Kirpal Singh.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 397. Rag Sorath. M.1.

TO FOLLOW THE GURU IS TO SERVE THE 'WORD'

Seeding the Soul: The Word is the Seed and the Longing of the Soul is the Soil

Having met the true Guru, the paramount honour, joy and obligation of the aspirant is mainly to follow His dictates with love, awe and humility, with full faith, reverence and devotion. The first best and the last best command of the Guru is to follow the Word he imparts to the aspirant, who is now the disciple. To follow the Guru is to follow the Word.

Here the questions may arise: What is this Word (सबद) which figures frequently in the literature of the Saints? How is this Word connected with spiritual life which the aspirant so eagerly wants to lead for self-realisation and self-fulfilment ? How can the Word be best followed or served?

'Word' is used by Nanak as a synonym of Guru For, Word is all that Guru stands for. Nanak says: "The Word is the Guru, deep and serene, without the Word, the world is a madhouse "[1] It is also regarded as a 'divine word' (धुर की बाणी) that has directly come from God and has, therefore, to be meditated upon It is the nectar which God has given to the disciple through the Guru. To repeat it in heart is to drink the nectar; and to drink the nectar is to be immortal. Word, the nectar, is the Name of God The True one is known only through the Name-the Word-given by the Guru to his pupil. "To love the Word of the true Guru is to serve God."[2] "Without the Word of the Guru, all other words are imperfect", says the third Sikh Guru[3]. Nanak himself said: "He who yearns for the vision of God, should love the Guru's Word. Verily, verily I say, He will attain the Lord "[4] From these utterances it is transperently clear that the word 'Word' has been used in two senses: in the sense of Guru and in the sense of Guru's word. As a matter of fact, so far as spiritual life is concerned, the Word of the Guru and Guru are one and inseparable from each other When the Guru imparts the first Word to his disciple, it is called 'Nama' (the Name); and when the Gu u speaks to his disciple regarding the nature of the Atman, those words are known as the divine utterances called 'Guru bani'. The act of imparting the Name is the act of sowing the spiritual seed in the life of the disciple.

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1 Message of Sikhism, p. 61. Rag Sorath, Guru I. by Harbans Singh.
2 Ibid. p. 60. Rag Gauri M.3.
3 Ibid., Rag Ramkali M.3.
4. Ibid., p 62. Rag Malhar M.1.

Word is the beginning and end of all spiritual journey:

As to the question how Word is connected with one's spiritual journey, it must have become clear by now that without the Word i e , the Guru, no spiritual life can be said to begin, and without the Word i e , the Name there can be no spiritual journeying at all. For, Nam (नाम) is a symbol which carries with it Divine Power; and 'Nema' (नेम) (meditation) is the process of identification with the infinite "If we have got this aeroplane", writes the great philosopher Saint of Nimbal, Prof. R D. Ranade, ' we may rise to any height. The grace that would descend on account of our Nama-smarana (meditation on the Name) would accelerate our progress." This is how through meditation and contemplation (सिमरन, मनन) the service to Word is indeed rendered. Lovefully denser, finer and subtler is the meditation, easier and quicker becomes the process of being one with God, the Almighty. Service to the Word is service to the Self par excellence. Service of the self is the same thing as service of God or the Guru It is the pathway to God-realisation. To serve the Word is to serve the Guru; to follow Word is to find God. In short, Word is the preceptor, Word is the path, Word is the vision; It is the be-all and end-all of all spiritual life.

: THE JOURNEY :

To follow the Guru is the Gurumat (गुरमुख) and one who does so is a Gurumukha (गुरमुख); to follow one's ownself in utter disregard of the great saying of the saint is called the Manmat (मनमत) and one who does so is a Manmukha (मन्मुख). The path of the Guru-willed (गुरमुख) fellow is the Upanishadic path of the "Sreyas'[1] (श्रेयस) or Lotus Way[2] (कमल मार्ग) as Nanak calls it; and its only goal is God-realisation. Our journey is the journey of the Guru-willed fellow; the path adopted by him is the Lotus Way leading to Godhood. The journey begins the moment the Word—Nama-is had or heard from the Sadguru In 'hearing' the Name the pilgrim has taken his first step towards 'Samyoga' the union of the soul with God. And till the last breath of his life this process of hearing has to continue. As there is no rest for breath even for a second's time. so there is no cessation of hearing the Name even for a moment in the life of an ardent Gurumukhi who has set his heart on meeting God face to face, on being eternally one with Him.

1. Kathopanishad.
2. Nanak Vani Jai Ram Misra, p. 576. Rag Maru M.1. Chaupada.

Hearing is the beginning, hearing is the process; hearing ends only when life ends.

: SRAVANA :

Sravana is the Chariot of Spiritual Journey:

So, it is with Sravana–hearing–that the spiritual journey of a devotee starts. The process of hearing is as long as life itself, but this is the only way for soul to commune with the Word or God. Communion with the Word is the goal of hearing For, it is only when this communion is firmly and finally established that the soul is liberated for ever, becomes pure, serene and blissful. One has thus to hear the Name imparted by the Sadguru constantly and consciously, with deep faith, love and regard till one's mortal coil falls. Only when the act of hearing becomes a loving regular, natural and incessant process–which it is not so easy a practice to acquire–the devotee is said to have taken a step ahead of mere machanical hearing. From simple, non-continuous and disciplined hearing the devotee then enters the realm of meditation or 'japa' as Nanak calls it. It is by this 'japa' that the meditator is transformed into the Word, the object of meditation being losing all sense of his own separative and individual existence Here the Word slips from the touch or vibration of the tongue down into the zone of the heart where it is remembered and heard through the inner tongue of the heart The Word may come up again on the outer tip of the tongue or stay in the throat, or vaccilate between these two points and finally settle down in the heart again as per the deepening quality of meditation or state of mind. By regular and regardful practice, however, the wild horse-the mind-may be briddled and consequently the mind may taste the sweetness of being tranquil. And, once the mind gets into the habit of being tranquil as a result of deep meditation, the door of contemplation on the vision of God may be opened by His Grace. Meditation on the name of God and contemplation on the vision of God which He may graciously manifest on to the devotee are thus the two vital wheels on which the spiritual chariot of the Word moves forward steadily and steadfastly. But the way is very tedious, rough and stormy. Man's Ego (Haume) is the chief obstacle. Only by God's grace, by constant meditation and contemplation, and by the power of the Sadguru the Word may reveal itself in all its trueness and fullness. Only then the meditator, the meditation and the meditated one i.e., the Word become harmoniously and inseparably one The identity of the soul with God is established for ever; 'viyoga' and 'vismriti' are trans-

formed into perfect and pure 'Samyoga' and 'Smriti'. The goal is reached The bride and the bridegroom get united in the Eternal flame of love. The journey ends. It ends only to become more intense, more and more contemplative and ever more blissful. It is the fulfilment of journey

But in between the first hearing of the Word from the mouth of the Sadguru and the ultimate revelation by the Word of its blissful infiniteness that unites the jiva' with 'Siva' breaking all the finite barriers of Existence, the pilgrim has to pass through several stages which have been severally described by Guru Nanak himself in Japji. There are hills after hills, valleys, after valleys, deserts after deserts of difficulties and desolation which have to be climbled and crossed before reaching the Presence of the Almighty. And the only support and strength through which the difficulties can be surmounted and other barriers overcome is the Holy Name or Grace of the Lord. Only by worshiping the Name, one may learn to live in His presence and attain the peace eternal "O Nanak, may we rise up the current of the Holy Name (the Divine Word) to Thy presence!"[1] All those who follow Nanak by internally remembering the Name without any break alone have the pleasure and privilege of being one with the One-Ik Onkar Satnam. Only then as a result of communion with the Word the Divine Will is revealed to the meditator; only then the sand-dunes of illusion disappear and the ocean of ego or existence dries up; only then the will of one gets in tune with the Will of God; only then the aspirant is said to have achieved the goal of his life-the goal of God realisation. Then nothing is alien to him; the whole world is encompassable into the embrace of his heart Nothing does he despise, everything does he love then. And the beauty is that in both these attitudes of hate for nothing and love for all he remains unattached and unconcerned. The only thing his heart is set on for ever is the inner Eternal Divine Music of the Word.

Spiritual Journey is thus journey into one's own-self:

The sum and substance of the science of hearing, 'sravana', is that the spiritual journey is essentially, and for all purposes, only an internal journey done on the sole and singular strength of Nam Sumiran (rememberance of God's Name) and dependence on God. The constant remember ance of Nam withdraws the mind from the outer objects and helps it to concentrate on the Nam itself, the inmost reality, that lies hidden and far away from the reach of the

1. Nanak Vani, p. 85. Japji 16

senses. It makes man intro spective and contemplative and enables him to free himself from the sensory thraldom. Only the true servant of Nam is really free from the slavery of passions. Only this inner journey of mind on the wings of Nam carries him deep inside, cuts him away from its moorings of the sensual objects of the world and drags it inside his own being step by step. In such a 'hearing' grows the seed power that helps the Self in knowing and coming to the fullness of its own nature. Spiritual journey is thus a very secret journey, the progress or otherwise whereof is known to the journeyman alone or to the Guru or God No other agency is there to know it; on other agency is there to accelerate the pace of inward progress One has simply to be true to one's ownself, to one's own Word of Guru By implication, therefore, man will give up his search of God anywhere outside his own-self. The seeking of God in the observance of outward means, the repetition of verbal formulae and the visiting of pilgrimages and synagogues amidst unfeeling hearts will surely be divined as vain pursuit without, of course, belittling their certain usefulness in life. For, the Imperishable can never be known through the perishable means. And the only imperishable means to know Him is the ceaseless remembering of God's Name as advised by the Guru.

Saint Doolan Sahib Says :

"Word is the lock and word is the Key thereto,
With the chains of Word all are bound.
The Lord resideth in the form of the Word,
I bow my head at Its feet"

One has thus to do only one single thing, to repeat the Name whole-heartedly with love (of God) and gratitude(towards the Guru) Only through the key of the Word the divine treasures of spiritual effulgence can be unlocked. Only through the power acquired by hearing the Word one can reach the unreachable Root of one and all, of one's own essence and core of being. To hear the Word with love and longing alone paves the way to the source of the Word, the Soul of souls, the Formless and the Eternal He. The Word alone is the connecting link between man and God, the imperishable bridge from over which the 'jiva' can travel successfully and joyfully from the perishable and visible world of existence to the imperishable and invisible world of essence; from the pitch dark world of Becoming to the well-illumined world of Being, from the world of carnal pleasures of the flesh to the world of divine bliss of the Spirit. The Word alone is capable of enabling its devotee to reachthe acme of spiritual fortress by bombarding and battering down the mighty

forts of Matter and agile arsenals of Ego. Word is power without compeer, and may reveal the One, infinite Almighty without the second, the Great Cause of every-thing, seen and unseen, living and dead.

The first and the last points of spiritual journey are thus the hearing the Name or Word of the Guru and being thereby in tune with the sweetest eternal Music, which the Word is capable of generating when the process of hearing becomes qualitatively more intense, more subtle, more distinct. More devotional and more rhythmical 'Sravana', which includes 'Sumiran', is thus the essence of spiritual life as also the alpha and omegha of spiritual journey.

: HOW TO HEAR ? :

Granted that hearing is the first 'sine qua non' of spiritual life and progress on the path of gradual realisation of God but the major difficulty is how to hear. What is to be heard is to be first dogmatically understood as the 'Word' of God. But who can hear that Word, and how?

Guru Nanak has succintly spoken of the various effects of 'hearing the word' in four consequent stanzas of Japji (from 4 to 8) on which we shall dwell later on. But what is implicit in these stanzas is that the vices that hinder man's journey towards God, the Indwelling Spirit, are for ever removed and the hearer of the Word–the true disciple himself becomes the respository and fountain of all those merits and virtues which help man severally and accelerate his process of reaching Him smoothly. "Those that hear, death do not fear. Their sorrows end and sins disappear" is the lyrical strain with which each of these stanzas ends or concludes. Stanza 21, in its second line, says: 'communion with and practice of the Holy Word with heart full of devotion procures admittance into the inner spiritual realms, washing away the dirt of sins at the sacred fount within." If we can probe deeper into the essential implications of this supreme word of Nanak's counsel, we can arrive at the methodology of meditation. There are two significant phrases in it: 'the heart full of devotion' and 'the sacred fount within' The first is the technique and the second, the destination; with the key of Word repeated with 'devotion' in the heart one can unlock the inner spiritual world and reach the Sacred Fount within and bathe in it and be sinless and sorrowless. This fount is situated, writes Kirpal Singh in his brief but monumental commentary on the Japji, Sloke

1. Japji. The Message of Guru Nanak, p. 155- by Kirpal Singh. Nanak speaks of five spiritual planes in all.

21, "in the third spiritual plane, called the 'Dasam Duwar', the tenth door".[1] The Muslim mystics call it Hauz-i-kausar and the Hindu mysticism describes it as 'Prayag Raj'. "It is here" continues Kirpal Singh, "that the pilgrim soul gets its real baptism and is washed clean of all impurities and regain its pristine purity".[1] And, thereafter, the spiritual journey of the disciple takes a higher step leading to the fuller and final communion with the Word, though only the very few Elect Ones of God reach there. It is proper, with this background of understanding, to trace the steps or stages of meditation which bring man nearer this Sacred Fount (Amritsar in Man) within.

: METHODOLOGY OF MEDITATION :

Four Stages of Meditation or Hearing the Name

To hear the word presupposes the utterance of it. Who utters the word? The Guru has already uttered the Word, it is now the solemn and sacred duty of the disciple to utter it till God is pleased to bestow His grace and take the disciple in His and ever uniting expanse of Embrace. The disciple, the spiritual journeyman or the pilgrim himself, has to utter the Word and hear it. Hearing depends upon uttering: louder the uttering, gross is the audibility; slower the uttering, subtle is the audibility. Obviously, hearing follows speech and speech according to the spiritual literature or mystical traditions of India, is of four kinds: (1) Vaikhari; (2) Madhyama: (3) Pashyanti; and (4) Para.

The Vaikhari Meditation through Tongue

(1) Vaikhari speech: it is spoken with the help of the tongue; such speaking is louder and gross in character and on physical plane: and the hearing of such speech is thus equally gross in character and on physical plane. Vaikhari speech is most useful in hearing the Name of God only in the initial stage, because the wildness of the mind can be thus restrained a little and it can at least be yoked to hearing the Word of the Guru It is a physical force employed to hook the psychic force to the act of hearing the Name of God though, of course, the fear of God and the mental inclination is implicit in such an act. This 'Vaikhari' speech is also very useful and the only means of hymn-singing-Nam Samkirtan-or recitation of the mystical rubric or morning prayer, in chorus 'Samkirtan' is certainly one of the very important spiritual activities and tends to promote one's love of God, but this is not what we call the real meditational hearing or utterance. For its relationship is only with

1. Japji. The Message of Guru Nanak, p. 155—by Kirpal Singh.

the physical organs of tongue and ears, and God is beyond the reach of physical senses.

Madhyama Meditation in Throat

(2) Madhyama Speech: When it is spoken and heard in the gullet by touching the tip of the tongue with the palate, it is called hearing the Word of the madhyama vani: Here the throat is the seat of hearing. Though it is more difficult kind of hearing than the former kind, it is more useful than the 'Vaikhari' sumiran (repetition of Name). It is more difficult because more energy and attention are required in uttering the Word more articulately and hearing it more distinctly It is more useful because the mind of man in this condition is largely cut off from the external world and is yoked in the service of hearing only the Word. Here the jewel Word emits its luster a little inside the chamber of the heart, for the madhyama utterance is on the threshold of physical and psychical realms. The Word is in the mouth as also in the throat: when it is only in the throat it peeps into the sphere below the throat and the vibrations the uttering of the Word create reach that zone too [1] The light and lustre of the Word thus seated in the throat-the midzone between the mouth and the heart-tend to lit up both the sides of the throat with its steady flame, says the great saint Sri Tulsidas. Here, there is a gradual assimilation of the meaning of the Name and the mind does at times feel more and more joy of its absorption with It. But this too is not conducive and catelytic to the meditation on the Name as Nanak describes, for the difference between the 'Vaikhari' and 'Madhyama' is of degrees only. Though less gross and low, both are on the physical plane; these are distinguishable only in degree in so far as the articulation of words and the audibility of sound are concerned[2] So cancelling this also as non-meditational hearing, we proceed to the examination of the third 'Pashyanti' speech as a possible seat of meditation.

Pashyanti Meditation in Heart :

(3) It does not mean that the first two kinds of hearing the Word, Nam sumiran, which constitutes the First Stage of Meditationare of no avail. For without them i.e., without coming through

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1. "राम नाम मणि दीप धरु, जीई देहरी द्वार। तुलसी भीतर बाहरि हुँ, जो चाहसि उजियार". Quoted by Prof. R.D. Ranade in his 'Parmartha Sopan; p. 252.
2. Manuscript on "Spiritual Treasures of Saint Ram Das., pp. 154-55 (Unpublished) -by Prof. V.H. Date.

the first stage it would not be possible to arrive at the third stage of 'Sumiran' or hearing wherein the mind participates, where the Word descends from the seat in the throat to that in the heart. It is too difficult and subtle a process of hearing the Name for the novice in the spiritual field. Even the spiritual apprentices of long standing have to struggle hard to keep their mind steadily tuned to the Music of the Name at Pashyanti level. Here the repetition of God's name is purely a mental process, for heart is certainly the seat of the mind though not of the soul. Here, as a result of prolonged and deep meditation, there is a close identification of mind with the Name. As and how meditation grows richer in quality in the 'Pashyanti realm,' where the eye of the mind sees the Word while distinctly hearing it at conscious level (not physical plane), the mind of the meditator tends to lose 'its native character' as it merges in the Name. Closer the identification of the mind with the Name, greater is the forgetfulness of one's own body and the external world. In the quietitude of this silent meditation of the mind, a certain calm dawns upon it and the heart partakes of a peculiar sort of joy. This is the state of true discipleship. For Nanak himself says :

> "The Word is the Guru. And the mind
> attuned to the Word is the disciple."[1]

Here the mind is fully absorbed in the loveful, silent and subtle meditation on the divine Name This is the second stage of meditation where the mind learns to firmly and finally tune itself with the rhythmic beat of the Word. Such moments of mind's at-one-ment with the Name are indeed few, peace-imparting and precious But it is difficult for the mind in the beginning to remain for long in such a state. When it comes to its own, back from its honeymoon with the Word, it begins to introspect and dwell on the meaning of the Word, on the nature of joy the deep meditat on on it produces, and the essential purpose of the divine scheme of life about which we shall speak at length at its proper place. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that mind begins to get hints of the divine will. The faculty of Intuition begins to work and illumine the faculty of Reason in the life of the meditator Reason begins to work as an intrument of intuition. But this mental absorption with the Name is also not the mystical 'hearing' of which Nanak speeks, though it is highly useful and takes the meditator a step higher up on the plane of spiritual journey. The 'hearing' which Nanak glories and sings in glowing term is still subtler and sweeter, quieter and calmer,

1 The Doctrine of Guru Nanak, p. 91 (Rag Ram Kali M 1) by Pritam Singh Gill.

more distinct and more conscious sort of meditation than all these three sorts of meditation. But that stage of meditation begins only when the three stages as described above have been crossed; not otherwise 'Pashyanti' stage of mental hearing, in its abiding, steady and dynamic state, is an intermediary stage between the mental meditation done at heart and the supramental meditation done at the 'Para' stage of speech.

The Para Meditation of the Soul:

At the fourth stage there is slowly and steadily established a perfect identity of the soul with the Word i e, God, for 'para' speech and sumiran is the seat of the soul Here the soul gains its original lustre and gradually loses itself in the understanding that the soul (atman) within is the same thing as the Soul or God outside and everywhere The immanent God and the transcendent God are one: Jiva, the 'amsha' (अंश) of the Lord, grows into the realisation of its being Shiva only to be finally united with Him for ever. The Word has entered the 'jiva' and has become inseparably one with the Word. Here the "meditational hearing" of Nanak is seen in its pure form The 'atman' hears the Paramatman; It hears the Eternal Music of the Word and gains the non-dual existence of Selfhood which is nothing but God-realisation The plane now is neither physical as in the case of 'Vaikhari and Madhyama' meditations, nor psychical or mental as in the case of Pashyanti meditation, but is purely supramental in character-the plane where mystical life is lived in full and where all spiritual journeys come to their ecstatic consummation It is here that the gates of Godhead are flung open. It is here that the surrender of the self is at its pinnacle point. It is here that Ego in man's heart falls prostrate in the sublimest service of the Super Ego. The will of man is subordinated and subsumed into the Will of God. The Guru-willed pilgrim becomes the Guru himself; he has had the divinest pilgrimage for which innumerable 'jivas' longingly crave and for which Nanak exhorts all mankind to have. Only here the 'hearing' in its true sense begins. Only when such a hearing' becomes a round-the clock routine in the life of a man, as a result of heartful devotion and soulful meditation on the Divine Name, the Nam jap is said to have come to its fruition. Only then can it be said that there is now the realisation of Truth in one's heart i.e, Haridaya Jnana (हृदय ज्ञान) as Nanak had it; only then whatever emanates from the mouth of such a Godman can be regarded as true glorification of God's Grace and Greatness, or mukhabhakti (मुख भक्ति) as Nanak prac-

tised it; only then there can be a life of spiritual detachment at its peaks and a true release of man's mind from the power prison of Ego and attachment or 'vartan vairaga' (वर्तन वैराग्य) as Nanak lived it Only then the mind is identified with the Soul, Soul with the Word, and Word with the Guru and God. All become One only then.

Such is the brief process of meditation on the Word of the Guru with whose Grace the meditator gradually crosses all the stages of meditation and finally reaches the last stage where Truth alone shines. It merits special notice that this meditational journey is like a battle which is to be fought alone and within one's own self. Only with the force of the Word which includes the Grace of Guru, loving faith in God and soulful meditation on the Name imparted by the Guru, this battle can be progressively won and the empire of Ego of which Mind is the seeming and for all material purposes the practical Sovereign Lord is finally conquered and annexed in the kingdom of God The flag of soulful devotion is thus unfurled on this Himalayan peak of Mind Only then the whole world of the physical and psychical senses falls prostrate at the feet of the Word, to symbolize which Nanak says 'man Jitai Jag Jeeta' i.e., the conquest of mind is the conquest of the world. And the conquest is celebrated eternally by the ever-resonating inner Music with which the heart of the drunken mystical pilgrim now reverberates. The meditator becomes the mystic. For does not Nanak say: "He becomes like Him with whom he is imbuded"?

: EFFECTS OF HEARING :

(Japji, 8 to 11) : It should have been clear by now that all spiritual life and progress on the Secret Path of God-realisation follows the bestowal of Guru's grace on the soul eagerly impatient to have His joyous and liberating vision. It is this clinging love which is the essence of God's teaching to the heart and which blossoms out in every beauty. When God's teachings become audible to the 'hearer' directly, and when the Word or Name of God is simultaneously heard with all its intrinsic Music and distinctness, the hearer becomes an adept, a Saint, nay God himself.

Japji ; 8 : By listening to the Word, in the true sense, that is, "by communion with the Word, one attains to the status of a Siddha (a man endowed with super-natural power), a Pir (A Muslim Divine) a Sura (a powerful petty God), a Nath (a yogi as great as Gorakhnath or Matsyendra Nath); by this communion one can understand and unravel the mysteries of the earth, the supporting Bull, and the heavens; all the regions of the cosmic existence stand revealed to the hearer's eye; by communion with the Word, one

enters the Kingdom of God through the portals of Death unscathed and lives in perpetual ecstacy. Says Nanak: ' the hearers ever blossom (in joy and peace); their sorrows end and sins disappear "[1]

Comments : The sum and substance of this eighth stanza is that the "hearer", by communion with the Name, rises above the physical consciousness and comes into the cosmic awareness. That is why the mysteries of the cosmos, nay of the entire creation, stand revealed to him.

Japji : 9 : In this stanza Nanak says : "By communion with the Word, one can attain the powers of the Lord (Vishnu), Creator (Brahma), King of God (Mahesh), win esteem even from the foul mouthed; 'have deep yogic insight into the mysteries of one's own body and of life; acquire the true import of the shastras (scriptures) smritis (law codes) and vedas (the revelations) Says Nanak: hearers ever blossom (in joy and peace); their sorrows end and sins disappear."

Comments : The sum and substance of the ninth stanza is that by 'hearing', the ' mortals are raised to godliness".[2] In the preceding stanza (eighth) Nanak sings out that by listening are revealed to man the secrets of Nature; in the ninth he points out that by listening the meditator no longer remains mortal, he acquires the there-fold powers of God-the power of creation, preservation and destruction and is enabled thus to participate in the work of God. The 'jiva' grows into Shiva. Man becomes Brahma by hearing. For, have not the ancient seers and sages of the highest mystic powers proclaimed : "Nada Brahma' ! He who hears it becomes It."

Japji: 10. In this stanza Nanak further points out the fruits of hearing. One becomes, by hearing, the abode of Truth, gains contentment and true knowledge: "one gets the fruit of ablution at sixty eight pilgrimage;"; one "wins the favour and honour of the wise ones"; one "attains the state of sahaj" (i e , one begins then to live in the state of the deepest and finest meditation done automatically at the highest pitch of awareness). Nanak says: "such hearers ever blossom (in joy and peace): their sorrows end and sins disappear "

Comments : Here Nanak speaks of the qualitative transformation of the hearer not on the cosmic level as in the eight stanza, nor on the godly level as in the ninth stanza, but on the mystico-human level. The meditator becomes a mystic of the purest water

1. Nanak Vani, p. 83. Japji 8.
2. Hymns of Guru Nanak, p. 48—By Kushwant Singh.

in the sense that he becomes a walking and talking Truth personified; his heart becomes an eternal seat of kindly contentment; his generosity and wisdom know no bounds and all get from him, in their earnest seeking, selfless and blissful blessing; he himself becomes a pilgrimage par excellence and his holy feet are graceful enough to bestow solace and liberation on all who seek refuge there. The Word he hears, he can pass it on to the longing souls and pave the pathway to their deliverance also. He lives in the pure music of meditation. He lives among men and in the world without being worldly and selfish. His Word is his world. He is a transfigured soul transported into the divinest state living in the human world All is the play of Grace of the Guru and God.

Japji: 11: In this stanza Nanak points out that by communion with the Word, one becomes the abode of ocean of all virtues, a Sheikh, a Pir and a true Spiritual Sovereign; one who is blind can find and see for oneself the path to selfhood, can fathom the unfathomable i.e., cross the sea of existence and reach the essence. Nanak says: "such hearers ever blossom (in joy and peace); their sorrows end and their sins disappear."

Comments : Herein Nanak speaks of the utterly human effects of communion with the Word. Perhaps this stanza refers to the beginning of the pilgrimage to the realisation of one's own self One who is blind to God, the only ultimate reality one who is yet immersed in mundance existence, one who has still to be virtuous in life even if he hears the Word (of course, from the mouth of a powerful saint who has realised God, a Saint whose briefest caricature is given in the preceding stanzas from 8 to 10) he will see for himself that God is and he will be able to find the pathway to Him if he persists in his attempts with due restlessness, sincerity and love. If he goes on listening to the Word, which the saint has imparted to him, many virtues will love to enter his life and the vices will begin falling out from his mind and life like the autumn leaves For, is not life leading to God a life of Beauty, Truth and Goodness ? What vices can touch the leader of such a life then ? Briefly, even the men of gross worldliness can, by hearing the Word, mend themselves, make their lives sublime, remember God and find the way to realise Him in all His glory and greatness.

The most subtle and substantial thing to understand about the importance and the fruitfulness of 'hearing' is that by listening to the Word, in the mystic manner (described in spiritual literature) one can be able, in due course of time, not only to be a

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1. Hymns of Guru Nanak, p. 48— By Kushwant Singh.

master of all kinds of attainments material and intellectual, moral and spiritual leading ultimately to God-realisation, but can also be able to listen to the Divine Will. The Word itself manifests this Will. Hearing of the Word leads to hearing of the Divine Will. And, when one begins hearing this divine will (not God's will, for, as Nanak says, God's Will, can never be known), it behoves him to make his reverent obedience to it. That is a new stage or turn leading to one's upward march on the mystical hills of self-realisation. Having listened to the will, as manifested by the Word itself during the course of introspection after proper meditation it is of great spiritual import and essence to obey the Will, or to follow it with feeling of love, gratitude and surrender.

MANNE (मन्ने)[1] OR MANAN (मनन)

Introspection and Obedience to the Word or Will (Japji 12 to 15): II Stage of Spiritual Journey

Loving and grateful obedience to the Will of God is the next and a higher stage on the path of gradual realisation of the Nondual Real One. In obedience to His will there is a gradual and natural process of self-effacement in the presence of the Name. But all obedience follows the intuitive divinisation of His Will during the course of introspection in the love-drunken moments just after the mind's return from its honeymoon with the Word. As already illumined earlier, when the Word is meditated upon purely mentally, there is a gradual absorption of the mind with the Name By implication and as a natural consequence of such a deep dive of mind into the Name, the 'I' is completely forgotten for a while till the mind lives lost in the Name. The moments of such mental absorption are the moments of self-forgetfulness The mundance consciousness of one's own body. of one's own ego and of one's external surroundings in the those moments is annihilated by the very power of the Word. It is Guru's Grace and with melowed head in gratitude man sings the glories of God and Guru's greatness. This is self-surrender, which is due to the devotee's feeling of the eternal presence of the Param Purusha. This might be a dogmatic belief in the beginning, but in due course of time one's own nothingness becomes clear beyond doubt; and instead the overpowering almightiness of God is first experienced at the feeling level and becomes thereafter an article of dynamic faith on the strength of one's own personal experience later-on.

1. The word 'Manne' is cognate with Sanskrit 'manan' and is held to mean the paying of close attention to what is heard (from God) and the steady effort to put His Will into practice. It is the beginning of the second stage of spiritual journey and the third stage of meditation which is purely mental.

Four Stages of Self surrender corresponding to the four stages of meditation:

Let this point of self-surrender be dealt with at length. As there are four stages of meditation corresponding to the four kinds of speech, so also there are four stages of self-surrender corresponding to the four stages of meditation. At the "Vaikhari" stage of meditation-a stage which is equally useful for hymn-singing (Naam Samkirtan)-atleast this much has to be conceded that man would not at all sit for meditation if there is in him no faith in the existence of God who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and graciously benevolent; that he would not at all take the trouble of offering some flowers or fruits, burning some incense, lighting a candle or singing a hymn or prayer in the hope of pleasing the Lord; that he would not at all seek the company of the holy ones, attend kirtans or hear the addresses of the Saintly fellows; that he would not bow his head at the altar of the Guru Grantha Sahib or before the figure of the Holy Mother or of Jesus Christ; that he would not do anything which might in any form be termed as religious were he not aware of his own Creature-Consciousness. What is man in this huge and gigantic expanse of the cosmos ? The very feeling of the littleness of one's own self is the beginning of the attitude of surrender. Though surrender at this level is obviously gross, born absolutely of fear and of one's own insignificance in this wide expanse of the universe, yet it is there at a very conscious and selfish-level. Through worship and prayer one wants to gain power, pelf and pleasure and be free from disease, discomfort or disrepute. The ego does dominate in the world of earthly existence, but only in relation to God one is fearful At least one edge of man's ego is rubbed and blunted; and he cannot but cry, in the words of Nanak, "That alone happens what He wills: For nothing is in the hands of Man."[1]

As the meditation on the Word deepens and reaches the Madhyama stage, so the feeling of self-surrender also rises from its being gross in quality to the refined one. Here surrender tends to be more mental in character and it becomes more and more refined as the meditator gradually grows into the realisation that all events happen in life and in the world as per Divine Will only; that God alone is the Doer and men are nothing more than instruments of His Will; that He is the cause of everything, the cause of the causes, the Great cause. Here the ego of man receives one more big shock. All the pleasures and pains are then attributable to Him, all glory

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1 Message of Sikhism, p. 96 Sri Rag M 1. by Harbans Singh.

and greatness of man is nothing but the gracious award of the Lord himself This is how the mind begins to think at this stage. As Nanak says: "In His will are men high and low, As in His Will, so are dispensed all pleasure or pain."[1]

But what man thinks, he may not practise for to say something is one thing and to do it is another. Even while crudely believing that God alone is the Doer, man may as he often does, arrogate to himself all the successes and achievements in life with a sense of pride, but he may even vehemently blame others for failures and frustrations in life and curse them. The feeling of surrender, though mental, is not in deeds Rightly, indeed, thus the fifth Guru says: "Easy it is to say and utter, But far harder to accept Thy Will." It is so primarily because of the very 'native' character of human mind, which is damn fickle and occilates with speed unimaginable between the contradictory sets of alternatives (Samkalp-Vikalpa Samuchaya Manah). For the thorough absorption of mind with the Word is yet a distant thing

With the mind of the meditator becoming fully identified with the Name of God, as in the third or Pashyanti stage of meditation, there comes, however, a real good qualitative change in the corresponding stage of self-surrender of the devotee. The moments of absorption are, as previously pointed out, the moments of self-forgetfulness. Here the real process of self-effacement of the devotee starts. It is here at this level of meditation that the devotee comes to realise that there is no wisdom higher than plain and prompt submission to God's Will;[2] that 'what pleases God is the only good done'[3]; that what pleases Him is the best occupation for him;[4] "the Ordainer directs everything according to His will";[5] and that without completely surrendering at His feet there is no way out. The dogmatic assertion of the creature-consciousness and nothingness of Man and of the Almightiness of God now becomes a living breath of the nostrils of the devotee. He begins to take a peculiar kind pleasure and pride in being one with the Infinite (Name); and here, again, the ego assumes a subtler form Whatever the case, this is a fact that the devotee at this stage of meditation certainly feels a joy of his being profoundly fortunate in being lost even for a while, in the glory of the Word; and that is enough to establish the far superior and

1. Nanak Vani, p. 79. Japji 2. Message of Sikhism, p. 97.
2. Message of Sikhism, p. 96. Rag Tilang M.1.—Harbans Singh.
3. Ibid., Japji. 18.
4. Ibid , p 94, Japji
5. Ibid., p. 95 .

subtler nature of self-surrender of the devotee. He means exactly what he says in Nanak's words:

> "They call me good or evil,
> But I have thrown myself at Thy feet."[1]

The mind of the devotee, at this stage, is enough reined and ready to follow the exhortation of Saint Kabir who says :

> "Seek not thou the abode of heaven,
> Nor fear thou the deeps of hell;
> For that which has to happen must
> happen, so build no false hopes in
> thy mind :[2]

It is in such a fertile soil of mental readiness that the plant of prayer spontaneously sprouts up as if with the music of Ignatius Loyala: "Take, Lord, and receive all my freedom, my memory, my understanding, and all my will, all that I have and possess. Thou givest it to me, to Thee Lord I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy Will. Give me Thy love and grace they are sufficient for me."[3] There is in these words the agony of the heart to have God's love and grace and the hearty will to sacrifice everything to have His love in exchange. The identity of separateness is greatly diminished but not demolished completely. Nanak says: "Men pray to Him for gifts, which He grants untiringly when all is His. What can we offer at His feet ?"

But when the Word descends still deeper from the Pashyanti to the Para meditation, when along with the absorption of the mind there is soul's absorption with the Name also and when this absorption of the soul with the Word gains stability, then the level of self-surrender rises to the desired heights Only then the ego loses its hold on man's mind and its charge is gradually taken over by the supermind. the Soul itself. The sense of separateness automatically withers away; and, when the walls of ego or arrogance that separate the soul from God topple down and totally disappear, then is self-surrender said to be pure and perfect Only Pure consciousness reigns supreme and, as a natural consequence thereof, the devotee stands bereft of all egoism in this very life. The sense of 'I' dies down in the realisation of that God alone is, Says Nanak.

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1. Message of Sikhism, p. 95. Rag Dev Gandhari M.1.
2. Ibid , p. 96. Kabirji. Rag Gauri.
3. Rehasya Vada, p. 178—Parashu Ram Chaturvedi.

"If one knew Thy will
One would not say, I am."[1]

Rightly does Kabir sing the same thing when he proclaims "When I was, Hari (God) was not; now Hari is, I am not.' This state of 'Samyoga'—union of Soul with God wherein God alone lives in consciousness i.e , 'Smriti'-is devoid of any touch or shade of Ego. As the ripples of the water bear no separate existence of their own, as the rivers when reach inside the ocean lose their distinguishable identities, so also when the soul ultimately merges into God as a result of long, ceaseless and heartful meditation on the Name and soulful contemplation on the Visions of God, it loses its individualistic existence born of ignorance and arrogance—that is, of Ego (Haume)—and reaches its native Root, the one Reality, God. Says Raidas, a great Hindu mystic: "Till the River reaches the heart of the ocean, it roars increasingly. When the soul sinks into the Sea of Ram, the ego's roar is obliterated (without trace)"[2]. Then It sees Itself in all its original and pristine colours and richness beyond expression. It hears then the Inner Music enternally sung on the chords of unison and then the Soul sings out in the words of St. Paul "I live, not I, but the Christ lives in me " The voice of Chirst guides and Paul follows. God commands and Nanak meekly and mirthfully hears the command (Hukam) and acts accordingly. May, Nanak doe not hear or act; God hears and God acts. For, in such a highly superb mystical existence God alone Is. He is the Doer.

In such a state, there is not even the sense of surrender in the devotee's heart, God alone is. In the orison of oneness, there is self-surrender of the purest and perfectest type. It is in such moments of perfect samyoga (oneness) that Nanak hears the Divine Order and hearkens mankind to understand It and obey It. Therein lies the delight of divine life; it is the delight of knowing the command. Therein lies the excellence of spiritual ecstasy; it is the excellence of serving God by obeying his command. This is the crowning culmination and cream of all heartful meditation and soulful contemplation, the 'haume' i e , ego is ultimately and for ever hushed into deep and dead silence and the 'hukam' of the Almighty alone is to be executed with selfless love and devotion, feeling of gratitude towards the Guru and fear of God.

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1. Message af Sikhism, P. 94—Japji—Harbans Singh.
2. Rahasyavada, p. 169—by Parashu Ram Chaturvedi.

EFFECTS OF OBEDIENCE

Japji 12 to 15—Here ends the second stage of man's spiritual journey and from here onwards begins the most difficult but the most enchanting process of the journey into the innermost recesses of the self. But before taking the step towards the delineation of the stage it is necessary and beneficial for the people duly 'initiated' or interested in practising the spiritual principles of life to know the "fruits of obedience" to the divine Will as described by Nanak himself. He devotes full four stanzas from 12 to 15 in the Japji on the point. Very briefly, we shall try to analyse them stanza-wise by giving the purpose of each one of them.

Stanza–12—None can with all available materials (pen, paper, scribe) describe the condition of one who has by obeying (manne) made God's Will his own; whoever tries to do so, must realise his folly.

So Niranjana is the Name; only he who carefully looks into the heart can know it.

Comments: Having experientially sung out the fruits of communion with the Word, which constitutes the First stage of man's spiritual journey in the preceding four stanzas of Japji from eighth to eleventh, Nanak now brings home to us the fruits of obeying the Will of God which, according to him, is the second major milestone on the spiritual Path Rightly does he tell us in this stanza that the state of the 'obedient' i.e. of one who makes God's Will one's own can never be described or told and further adds that if anyone tries to tell it he will have to repent for what he has said about him and reverse his remarks. It has to be understood here in all clearness that the understanding of divine Will is possible only when the "Will is revealed; and the Will is revealed only to those who practise the Word i.e. repeat the Name longingly and rhythmically with love and regard on the third and advanced stage of mental meditation. Only in the moments of deep absorption of the mind with the Name the divine Will may be revealed by God's grace and only by His grace the revealed will can be re-divined on meditätor's return from his wedlock with the Word. No amount of reasoning can know it or guess about it. For God is beyond thought and imagination, for God's revelations are as inaccessible to Reason as the His Name is. 'Niranjana' that is, which can not and does never come to the sight of the physical eyes, the 'Charma Chakhsu' is the Name and to only them who remember Him with all absorping love and devotion can His Will be intuitively known. That is why the way the mystics act or behave is usually misunderstood and misjudged

by men of common intelligence and dry, logical reasoning. Only when after a certain lapse of time, things happen the way the mystics had divined in their acts or utterances and which was misjudged and mocked at by people adept at rational assessments, the reality puts the ridiculers to a sense of shame and surprise. It is, there fore, not within the propriety of the worldly men to make any observations about the saintly or god-fearing fellows only on the basis of their external conduct or out fit. Any observation how-so-ever rationally arrived at will only cause the observer to blush, for it will be belied and it will rebound on him with the same vehemence with which it was made. Many dub mystics as 'cynics' or 'whimsical' or 'moody' in a mood of decrying them with their assumed rational superbness and worldly disposition, only to realise their folly in due course of time.

In essence: It is impossible as also a folly to describe the state of the obedient; only they who have practised the Word and are graced by God to know can know it.

Stanza-13: By obeying the Will, intelligence and clear thought arise in the mind; one rises to universal consciousness i.e. develops clairvoyance and transvision of the whole creation: suffers no calamities, and goes not in the power (noose) of Death (yama). So Niranjana is (obedience to) the Name; only he who carefully looks into the heart can know it.

Comments : Undoubtedly he, to whom God's revelations come, gains excellence of intellect without any effort. His intelligence is illumined by the revelations and his reasoning faculty is oriented uniquely a new by the grace of God. When intuition, revelation and illumination take hold of the devotee's mind, his intellect is naturally sharpened, reasoning is divinely refined, and observation becomes more and more intuitive. What darkness of doubts there can be when the light of Sun enters the chamber of man's heart : what illusions can grow and drag man to way-ward life when the divine illumination dawns upon his consciousness leading him ever forward towards God head. Where God is, all power is, all knowledge is; all pervasiveness is. The 'obedient' one begins to share with God His omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence only to the extent and time He Wills. The powers of clairvoyance and transvision of the whole creation do come to rest in such an obedient one But because he has to move forward in his journey to Godhood, he does not rest content with these powers. He uses them when God wants him to use, not otherwise at all. Their surrender is great, their power is great, because the power of the Word they

practise and obey is great. It is a great spiritual experience. Very few know it.

Stanza–14: By obeying the Will, one speeds on to the Higher spiritual planes unhindered, openly and duly honoured, one does not (have to) walk on by-lanes, and is united with the Dharma (Righteousness). So Niranjana is (obedience to) the Name; only he who carefully looks into the heart can know it.

Comment: Spiritual life does not grow in vacuum When the heart and soul of the pilgrim are filled with the ever reverberating energy of Name who can impede his journey and put obstacles in his way. What power on earth can hinder his upward soar to God when His Name is with him? Slowly and gradually door after door shall be flung open unto him and he shall feel himself being lifted by the power of 'Name repeating' and by the grace of God higher and higher from one spiritual plane to the other. What is utmostly needed is the ascending love of God and the overflowing and unalloyed devotion to His cause. He will, by the very force of remembrance of God, go on crossing belt after belt of spiritual ascent till all the three realms-physical, astral and causal-are crossed and till the ego is annihilated root and branch which is the cause of transmigration and the pilgrimage is complete So, only when soul comes to be filled to the brim with the flow of life from the Fountain head of all, She (soul) is made subtler and subtler from day to day. This enables her to rise into the higher spiritual planes-through the Royal Path of Righteousness until she reaches her divine Goal in Sachkhand, about which we shall speak later. In brief, he who obeys is enabled to progress from one spiritual plane to another till he reaches the very source and becomes one with it. As he proceeds on the journey, his mental and spiritual horizons widen and his life gradually becomes the Path itself, after which no wandering astray is possible. When the time comes the pilgrim on the Path becomes the Pilgrimage himself.

Stanza–15: By obeying the Will, one finally enters the realm of Salvation, leads his kith and kin also to freedom, becomes the Guru and guides others on the Royal Path. He transcends desires and wombs. So Niranajana is (obedience to) the Name. Only he who carefully looks into the heart can know it.

Comments: A time comes when, in this very life, the practitioner of Word himself becomes Word personified i.e. a sage or saint. The practice of Word which means and includes the soulful meditations on the Word-sumiran of the highest type-and also making God's Will one's own 'manne'-not only makes the meditator a par-

ticipant in nature and workings of God, but also gives him the power to save his own kith and kin. Here the Saint's kith and kin are not to be misconstrued as his own children born of his wife, but his followers only, that is, those who seek his counsel and who are blessed by God through his Grace. It is by obeying His Will that the meditator becomes a mystic and is saved from the hellish durdgery of falling into wombs It is by obeying that he can act, as per God's Will, as the saviour of his followers For did not Christ say to the seekers of divine peace and salvation: "Come, follow Me" ? What for ? Only for soul's perfect and eternal rest in union with the Beloved. Can Reason help man get all this ? Only the love of God can, when it is blessed by the Grace of the Guru. The essence and ascents of spiritual life are matters beyond Reason. No amount of human efforts and reasoning can open in the life of man a window on the life of true harmony. The converse is, however, true that when harmony is achieved in life by ever ascending devotion to God, as a result of Grace the power of man's reasoning may attain purity and increase by leaps and bounds. This ascending love of God restores purity to mind and intellect, thus freeing it from the evil that separates it from Him, the Holiest of the holy. As obedience to God's Hukam increases the 'haume' is increasingly rooted out from man's mind till it is completely purged Obedience purifies and makes the devotee's inner heart–'antahkaran' Sinless and meritorious. It is by obeying the Will of God with love, faith and gratitude that the journeyman of spiritual industry may rise to the highest office (Pancha)[1] in the Divine Court of the Almighty.

3. CONTEMPLATION
(On the Vision of God)

The third stage of Spiritual Journey:

Japji 16 to 33 : As meditation becomes gradually more and more intense and heartful, and as the intimations of soul that come to the devotee as a natural result of Grace following such deeper meditation are lovingly obeyed, a time arrives when the element of contemplation enters the life of the meditator. As meditation is heartful, so contemplation is soulful. In meditation, mind gets deeply immersed in the repetition of God's Name; in contemplation mind comes in contact with Divine Visions in its colourful, majes-

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1. "पच" "the five". In a village the five chief men used to from in those days a sort of village council, the 'Panchayat' and so the word 'Panch' gained the sense of arbiter or the chosen leader. Similarly, there are the 'Elect' ones in the court of God also, who ha [illegible] cted to keep Him in their hearts day and night till the last breath [illegible] he mortal body. Those who thus elect God are elected by God too.

tic and mystic variety. As the music of mental meditation attains deeper harmony with the Word, the vibrations it produces gently go on knocking at the door of soul which opens the door and lets the mind sweetly enter the inmost and secret chambers of the divine effulgence. There the mind is overwhelmed by a peculiar sense of 'wonder'-vismad-and is overcome. Blessed are those moments, for there is nothing merrier to the pilgrim than the bliss of contemplation. It is decidedly a step ahead of meditation on 'Pashyanti' level, on the great mystical path of Realisation. It is a part of the "illumination" in its ascent to the final stage of "union"; and it is necessarily preceded by hard, self sacrificing road of "purification."

Contemplative sweetness is gotten not without the full labour, and is possessed by joy unique and untold. Here all the vanity of mind dies down suddenly in the 'Vismaya' it produces Here the soul makes continued and intermittant efforts to seek itself in its true nature by continually renewing its detachment from transient things and men. Here the soul makes the final bid with full contemplative force to free itself from the finite ego. Here is the door to the glimpse of the infinite opened in the life of the contemplator. Only when ego dies, the fetters of finite existence break down one by one of their own accord. In a creative death, the individual ego must make way for a higher, God-filled self. Contemplation is in this sense always soulful and constitutes a great step on the Mystic Path carrying the journeyman right to the court of God, only to be bewitched by the baffling majesty and magnanimity of the Lord. Only there when he sits in the company of the elects in the living presence of the Holy, the spiritual kernal is offered to him by God; the mystical treasures of infinite hue and veriety are flung open before his inmost eyes; the beautiful panorama of delightful and dazzling majesty begins to dance on the pulpit of his inward gaze. Slowly and gradually the rendevous between the self within and without is created where both hug close to each other in a bid to be united into the blissful union. The union is yet a distant thing but the bewilderment at the most Beautious sight is great and greater still is the awareness of one's own pettiness, of the futility of all sense vanity, of the nothingness of the small 'I'[1].

As we shall soon see, contemplation enters into the life of the devotee as a new and wonderful experience. This experience has been described by many a mystic, but not so clearly and profoundly

1. Nanak Vani, p. 85, Japji—16.

as by Nanak. There in the contemplative vision[1] are revealed with superb depth and subtlety the infinitude and unutterable might and majesty of God. Only the Eternal and Endless stands manifested in all His glory and greatness, beyond imagination and beyond all excellence of thought. Speaking of such contemplative visions Plotinus, the Prince of non-Christian mystics, who rightly regards all spiritual journey as "the flight of the alone to the alone"[1] says : "Beholding this being——resting, rapt, in the vision and possession of so lofty a loveliness, growing to its likeness, what Beauty can the soul yet lack ? For this, the Beauty supreme, the absolute, and primal, fashions its lovers to Beauty and makes them also worthy of love——And one that shall know this vision—with what passion of love shall he not be seized, with what pang of desires, what longing to be molten into one with This. what wondering delight:——He will be flooded with awe and gladness, stricken by a salutory terror; he loves with a veritable love, with sharp desire; all other loves than this he must despise, and disdain that once seemed fair."[2]

This indeed, is the mood even of those who, having witnessed the manifestations of God, can never again feel the old delight in the comeliness of material forms. What then are we to think of one who contemplates Absolute Beauty in its essential integrity, asks Nanak. Contemplation is directed toward the ultimate, the highest, the absolute, toward God in His totality and infinity, in "His unutterable plenitude".[3] "The grace of contemplation", says Bernard of Clairvaux, "is granted only in respone to longing and unfortunate desire."[4] Not only are contemplation of God and union with God free gifts of divine grace; so also are longing for them that find their expression in the heartful meditation on God's Name. The best thing that one can do in this life is to be silent and let God work and speak; when one's all energies are withdrawn from one's own works and thoughts, then will this (divine) Word be spoken. Only in this condition of passive openness and readiness is true contemplation possible.

Contemplation is, thus understood, a spiritual vision, a total vision, directed toward the divine reality in its transcendental totality, a vision that is not voluntarily induced by human activity but that arises without our volition, which, speaking in pure religious terms, is inspired, infused, and bestowed as a divine grace.

1. Spiritual Disciplines; p. 205—Papers from the Eranos Year Books.
2. Enneads, by Plotinus, 1-6-7.—Translated by Mckenaa, p. 62.
3. Nanak Vani, p 87. Japji 19.
4. Sermons on the Canticles, xxxii, 3. Quoted in Butler, p. 145.

Vision of wonder at the Infinite expanse of cosmos:

Japji 16 and 19 : Viewed in this background provided by Nanak himself. contemplation on the Visions and the revealed attributes of God is the golden carpet spread by God Himself to welcome His devotee in His Divine Court. The reception is so wonderous and so unique that Nanak can not but say: "What power have I to conceive of Thy wonderful nature ? Too pcor, am I, to make an offering of my life to Thee

Whatever pleases Thee is good Thou art for evermore. O, Formless one"[1] The contemplative 'vision of wonder' hammers into Nanak's mind (1) the utter incapacity of human intellent to 'concieve' of the wonderful nature of God, (2) the impossibility of man to make any offering to Him because everything in this vast universe is only His and not man's and (3) the sense object of surrender before the immeasurable expanse of the Cosmos. Soon the vision brings forth the realisation that behind the visible creation there is a Law that upholds or keeps it;[2] that there are innumerable worlds within the universe and the wonder is that this universe is sustained by the fabled Bull of mythology;[3] that the Bull is no other than the eternal Law of infinite Justice born of Mercy, the Law of Karma;[4] that it is through the mystical experience of the workings of this Law (of Righteousness) that the soul can win to real wisdom and the understanding of God's infinite Will.[5] That Will is not arbitrary or haphazard, ' but it is," writes Duncan Greenless "The creative keynote of the universe sounding on the key board of each soul",[6] who can understand all this except by God's grace ? Those who know this are the Elect ones of His Court.[7] It is enough for us to accept gladly what ever He may send to us knowing it must be always for our good. And so, with humility enlightened and strengthened by experience, Nanak ecstatically sings out "whatever pleases Thee is good."

Vision of Nothingness:

Having envisioned the endlessness of the creation, Nanak grows into the experience of his nothingness and virtual impotence in face of the omnipotence of the Author of this creation, whose glory and greatness is every moment devotionally sung by innume-

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 85. Japji 16. Last four lines.
2. Ibid ,
3 Ibid.,
4. Ibid ,
5. Nanak Vani, p. 85. Japji 16.
6. The Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib, p. 236 Ducun Greenless.
7. Ibid.

rable fellows. Countless are the yogis, the practitioners of silence, the scholars of scriptural studies, the learned pandits and other worshippers who are all engaged in paying glowing tributes to His Majesty.[1] But the imagination of all of them combined combes back from the gates of His Kingdom blank and baffled. The only homage worthy of Man on the Path is to ever continue his devotional meditation on the Name imparted by the Sadguru as God's Golden gift.

"Vision of One-ness" "of the utter usefullness" of one and all the pious as well as the impious ones—in the Divine Scheme of life.

Japji. 18: Such devotees of the Lord are the real rulers of the world from within, but those who are, as per known ethical standards, vile and wicked have also a vital role to play in the divine scheme of life. There are countless fools, liars, mischief-mongers, theives, crooks, tyrants, murderers, sinners, lowly, mean and such one's who bring calumny upon the good ones and pollute the health of social life.[2] They are the opposites of the holy, the good and the faithful ones; by opposing these righteous souls, by their own wicked deeds of violence and filth, they corrupt the world and tease the simple and pious folk. Nanak says that these too serve Him by drawing into play the patience and hidden virtues and courage of His loving saints.

Vision of the Wheel of life.

Japji 20: Men are wicked or wise according to what they do. "As one sows, so does one reap.[3] "O Nanak, men come and go by the wheel of birth and death as ordained by His will".[4] Those who hear His Will have Divine Destiny and those who do not have the Wheel of Fate to grind them till they turn inward in the self-search and are blessed by God's Grace. That communion with the Word alone paves the pathway to this Destiny[5] is the Truth duly experienced by Nanak.

This vision of the wheel or Law of Karma is a very high kind of spiritual experience. It points out the magnitude of sin and warns us against the light manner in which we regard it. Sin is not a mere abstraction but a heavy load.[6] Which pressing the soul, prevents its ascension to God's Court. The only remedy of Sin is

1, Nanak Vani, p. 86. Japji 17.
2. Nanak Vani, pp. 86-87. Japji 18.
3. Ibid , p. 88. Japji 20-6.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

Merit; the only merit capable of washing the ageless dirt of sin is the loveful and surrenderful rememberance of God i.e. the communion with the Word.

Vision of Light or Till

During the profoundest moments of meditation, Nanak had been blessed by the grace of the Word with the most sublime and purifying vision of light of 'Bindu', a point of light, as small as a 'til'—followed by the realisation of the utter inadequacy and inefficacy of austerities, charities, pilgrimage, mercy, alms-giving; of scholarship and wide learning and of yogic exercises in man's search of the ultimate. Only through the communion with the Word, the Ultimate and the Absolute can be known and that too, as and when He wishes to reveal Himself. This vision of 'Bindu' made Nanak all the more restless and his mind began yearning all the more to know the Truth in all its comprehensiveness. What is of great spiritual significance in this Vision of Light is that it marks a step ahead on the path of self-realisation and prepares the devotee for a further and deeper leap into the inmost recesses of the Self. A new and direct link is forged, a new inner spiritual bridge is created by crossing which man's mind and intellect get lodged into the folds of the Indwelling Spirit to be united with it in due course of time. This stage of spiritual journey is so highly important that this vision of Til by Nanak merits an ad verbatum reproduction. It is as follows: "who ever gets the vision of Til, to him pilgrimages, austerities, mercy, charity and alms-giving, cease to be of any consequence." By heartful meditation and soulful contemplation on the Word, one gains easy admittance into the Inner Spiritual Realms, washing away the dirt of sins at the sacred Fount (Amritsar) within; All virtues are Thine, O Lord; I possess not one.

There can be no worship without meditational contemplation. From Thee has emanated the Bani or the Holy word, which is the Royal Road to Salvation. How shall I describe Thee or know Thee ? Great are thou, and greater still is Thy Holy Word, What It wills, cometh to pass. Thy greatness, Thou alone knoweth. And those, O Nanak, that claim to know the most on their own, shall have no honour in the life beyond "[1]

In this experience Nanak speaks of the vital import of the devotee's "ingress into the Til—the inner Eye".[2] Kirpal Singh says that The Masters (Guru Nanak among them) have taught that it is necessary to control the 'Pranas' (breaths). One may with-

1. Nanak Vani, p. 88. Japji 21
2. The Japji, p. 152—by Kirpal Singh.

draw the sensory currents without touching the 'pranas', through 'simran' and through focussing one's attention, behind the eyes, at the seat of the soul." Here is the entrance to the Being, the uncreate (Avyakrita). From here the soul may travel further on the spiritual path elbowing behind one by one the veils within which He dwells. 'Til' is the seat of soul in Man. The Sufis call it 'Nukta-i-Saveda'—In the Gospel it is described as 'Single Eye'. The great Saint Tukaram sings out "Tila evadha bandhuni ghar: aant rahe vishwambhar. Tila ituke he bindule; tene tribhuvana kondatale"[1] i.e. having bu lt a house as small as 'Til' God Vishwambhar dwells in it; This 'point' like 'til' pervades the three worlds. It is a vision of profound spiritual import and serves as the base for higher flights of the soul. True, indeed, it is the first stage where the soul collects itself and is enabled to rise into the higher spiritual planes. Even Tulasi Das tells that the mystery of God is revealed only when one penetrates behind the Til.[2]

At this stage of spiritual journey, the pilgrim realises the enchanting sweetness of divine life and comes to recognise that God is Truth. None can know Him and He alone knows Truth, for He is Truth Himself only he who becomes himself may have a glimpse of it, as Saint Kabir says "Kabira Dekha Ek Ang' i.e. Kabir beheld a Fraction (of it). Only Grace works. He who says he knows the Truth is not only mistaken, but falls away from the mystic treck and is not honoured in life beyond. For, the illimitable has no limits and it is enough that the stream losses itself in the ocean. For the depths of the ocean remain unknown to the Stream [3]

Vision of the Cosmic Gate :

Japji-27 : Journeying still deeper, after gaining by God's grace an ingress into the inner Eye the Til, the soulful contemplation reveals to Nanak the unutterable majesty and the infinite expanse of innumerable creations which bow in reverence and awe before the Lord Almighty. In His unfathomable and unfordable creation Nanak gets a glimpse of gateway to God. The creation is the House wherein God lives It is an experience par excellence without which entry into Goodhead is impossible. This baffling and wonder-evoking vision of the cosmos is spiritually as high and valuable as Arjuna's 'vishwaroop darshan' in Srimad Bhagwadgita, though the vision does differ in details. Here it is that Nanak's feeling of self-surrender reaches its pinnacle point as in the case of Arjuna He cannot but exclaim in wonder : "How wonderful Thy

1. NITYA NEMAVALI p 46-By Dr. V.H. Date.
2. The Japji, p. 152.-by Kirpal Singh.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 89-Japji 23.

Gate: how wonderful Thy mansion, from whence Thou watchest Thy great Creation." He goes on describing the vastness of the creation-the five elements, various gods and goddesses including the God of Death, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, the countless and peerless 'sidhas' and 'sadhus', mighty forces and powers of Nature, heavens and earth, creation and its creatures, and many more-and sees there at the cosmic gate innumerable pilgrims of purest rays singing sweetest melodies glorifying the boundless greatness and generosity, might and magnificance, Mercy and majesty of the Holiest. He who lives in all and everywhere and in whom all and every thing live too. Nanak says with a rare feeling of awe, reverence and surrender that ' mystics without compeer sing with love and devotion Thy praise."[1] At Thy Gate reach countless pilgrims "whom one can not even remember". The very creation is an eternal music, glorifying God's greatness. It is 'Shabdatmika' eveloped in the Music of the Word. The vision of the illumitable expanse of creation is, however, not the vision of God.

The vision of God is yet to be; but the vision of the very multihued panorama of the unknowable expanse of creation-the vision of the cosmos is more than enough (a) to instill in Nanak's heart the scaring reality lieing beyond the ken[2] of his grasp; (b) to make him realise that God lives in His handiwork,[3] the cosmic creation and holds it also in Himself that He is the greatest of the great ones, the supreme Master and does what He lists.[4] He is the king of kings, the Almighty Lord." and (c) to ultimately lit up in his heart the unshakable and indelible realisation that "ours, O Nanak, is only to abide by His will."[5] Nanak falls prostrate at His feet. And with a heart drenched in devotion and roused in live, Nanak makes his surrender at the sweet will of the Lord complete. Only then does God deliver unto Nanak, His secretmost intimations which Nanak, in his, turn, sings to us in order that we may be able to climb up through the practice of the Word, the Grace of God and power of the Sadguru the higher cliffs of mystical progress the still lie on the path ahead.

It is only the "water of life" which wells up within the heart from the infinite source within—the constant loving of God, the fount of Holiness—that can purify man from within and facilitate his own word journey to the Mystical union with the 'I' of all, of

1. Nanak Vani, p. 92. Japji 27. 16th line.
2 Ibid., Japji 27. 18th line
3. Ibid , Japji 27. 23rd line.
4. Ibid., Japji 27. 24 to 26th line.
5. Ibid , Japji. 27. 26th line.

the universe the cosmic 'I' God, the Purushottam of the Bhagwadgita,[1] of ourselves, the vision of the cosmic Music gently dins into our inner ears, we are indeed nothing Only His Will works. He is the beginning of all creation, before and after it also. Bow down at His feet. No Sin can survive that surrender.[2] Cleaner than the cleanest is the inside now. The fog of egoism has vanished. Pilgrim is now fit to present himself before the creator of all that is, was and will be.

Awarness of Oneness with all in the Cosmos

This requires a rigorous spiritual discipline, a catholic outlook on life—an outlook where one looks on all as equals and sees His hand in every happening and Him in every person, place or thing. That is the only way—be one with all if you want to be united and with the one for ever. Herein is thus now the ground and preparation For an upward and 'still' higher flight. When one begins experiencing the presence of the Supreme Being every moment every when, then is the Grace of God at its climax. On the wings of pure contemplation and with the live force of the Word, the spiritual eggout of which came forth the cosmic Existence (Asat i e. the Manifest), one is now anabled to move higher and higher from one mystical plane to the other But higher the flight, greater is the peril. Nanak, therefore, experiences the utter necessity of arming himself with virtues of sovereign significance that assist man in preventing any mishap in the journey It is an extraordinarily inner journey and nearer the man approaches to the core of the Atmic reality—the essence (Sat) behind all existence (Asat), the self-within the body—he must abide by the Word whole heartedly with utter dedication and surrender To this end, Nanak drops a sweet word of wisdom as counsel and a tender note of caution against the dangers that lie on this sharply edged and narrow, clean path. He advises the pilgrim how to act in this last stage of surrender, which is the real 'yoga' culminating in pe fect 'Samyoga' and 'smrti'. Let contentment, he says in Japji[3] "be the ear rings; awe and reverance for the self be wallet; constant meditation be the ashes preparedness for death be the clock; body be like unto a chaste virgin, and Master's teachings be the supporting staff of one ready to render his surrender absolute. The highest religion is to rise to universal brother-hood. Let him then be absolutely accessible, with loving

1. Bhagwadgita, Chapter XV.
2. Bhagwadgita—Mamekam Saranam Vraja. Aham twam sarva papebhyo mokhshisshyami ma shucha."
3. Nanak Vani, p. 93. Japaji 28.

humility, to all as an equal and as a friend. It is kindness and compassion for the afflicted souls that opens the way to the realisation of cosmic oneness of all beings, which in its own turn awakens in the contemplational silence of the heart God's uniquely soft, sweet and gentle voice, and leads him to, the final step of surrender or 'Samyoga'. For, this is the greatest victory man can win, and all these are perfections (Siddhis) for which he must strive. Self-conquest by way of absolute surrender at the feet of Almighty is the highest of victories, the hardest and the most delightful to achieve.

Having thus exhorted to the yogis in the art of real 'yoga' or communion with the self within, Nanak addresses his wise note of caution to the householders as pilgrims of the ultimate. He commends us to make Divine knowledge (vidya-sa vidya ya vimuk'aye) that liberates our diet and to attune ourselves with the music of the Word so that the spiritual power (siddhis) he acquires thereby may not be abused by him in a mood of pride and arrogance. The spiritual pride is the greatest peril now on the path of surrender Let God's Will prevail. Hear and obey the Word. You will know Him and become what you, in essence are Nanak proclaims in divine musical notes: "Wealth and supernatural powers estrange one from the Lord. The world goes on the two principles of union (Samyoga) and separation (Viyoga). And all receive their share as He ordains. Hail, Hail, to Him alone." It is, therefore, very necessary that the petty ego that causes 'viyoga' should be burnt in the fire of soulful contemplation on the Word out of which has come the flaming world. This egolessness born of absolute surrenderfulness of heart through the Grace of God and pure contemplation on His visions and attributes alone is capable of leading man to the attainment of reunion with the Creatro, the Fount of Peace and Joy eternal. Says St. Augustine: "Our hearts find no rest, until we rest in Thee".

Only they who have experienced the rest eternal in His lap can strike such a note inviting man to the fulfilment of the divine urgency of the spirit within him the utter urgency of his happy resurrection in Him, the Holy Home of Harmony. This respose is to be had right in the heart of incessant activity of repeating Hari-Nam; it is to be enjoyed in the magnificent depths of the silence of the heart only there when everything else is quietened and naturally forgotten in a result of loveful and incessant rememberance of the love He, pure rest of eternal consciousness dawns, surges up and lives dynamically still It looks contradictory. How can it be dynamic and still at the same time ? On'y the experience can tell that this is the self manifesting and self-proved Law of spirit. One has to

process himself through devotional meditation and contemplation to this state of Bliss. God-realisation is not an event or occurrence, it is a process that survives all experiences till the illumination takes hold of soul and nothing but 'that' remains. He 'is' by His own will and manifests Himself by His own unaccountable Grace. Gut before His Grace unites the devotee with Himself, the Home must needs be as clean as a Temple. A sublime surrender is the necessary fore-ground In the purity of the heart and the solemn silence of the soul there is the experience of the presence of God. For, the heart of the devotee is the temple of God. Purity is His seat, Peace is His presence, Bliss is His State.

In such a solemn silence the subtle voice of God wells up gently from within. He who hears it is blessed and rare Soon does the hearer of this voice realise, at this high ascent of spiritual life, that the entire creation gushes out of Maya Shakti through the intermediary power of Brahma, is sustained through that of Vishnu, and destroyed through Mahesh-who in their turn are respectively the great Gods of three 'gunas' (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) [1] Maya-Shakti, the very power of the Almighty, is the Mother of this triune universe which is symbolised by creation, preservation, and destruction-the three representative principles of Rhythm (Sattva), Activity (Raja) and Passivity (tama). He acts not, for He desires not: but His power acts and does everything for His sport.[2] Everything works according to His will, and yet the paradox is that they can not know. Everything is law governed, governed by the Law Eternal that is nothing but the expression of His Will. Nanak knew by His Grace and was liberated even during his life span (i.e , Jivanmukta).

Only at this high state of divine life one can say with Nanak that the Lord is true and as such His works must be true. His creation is not chimera, not an illusion but His holy Abode. He lives in His creation and by only knowing through experience-this one can know or experience Him. The experiential awareness of the creation is the Gateway to the presence of God. When the realisation is strengthened and sublimated by experience of Reality as revealed by the Grace during the moments of heartful meditation, the pains and pleasures of the devotee on physical and psychic levels lose their hold on his mind. For, the very merging of mind in contemplation implies its complete freedom the spell of pains and pleasures; the consciousness of body of senses of mind, of ego etc., is benumbed

1. Nanak Vani, p. 94. Japji 30.
2. Ibid.

to such an extreme that nothing is remembered except the Name of God. The implicit import is that only he who forgets everything but forgets not the practice of the Word i.e., 'Nam Sumiran' is the true pilgrim and this state of his life is the true pilgrimage. It is by Grace and men becomes God-ward a pilgrim-and it is, again, by Grace that he himself becomes a pilgrimage i.e., a God-realised saint. So sings out Nanak: "Let one tongue grow into hundred thousands, nay even twenty times more, and each of them endlessly chant His Holy Name. Only in this way lie the steps that lead to 'Ekesha' the one Almighty. In this way would I climb he Bridegrooms (five) stairs and become one (with Him). Nanak, He is obtained through Grace; false are the babbles otherwise."[1]

This is one of Nanak's ecstasies through which express the all powerfulness of Nam-sumiran It is only through this meditational method that the 'beloved' (self) can realise her Love (God) Name is the gift of God and perseverance on the path of nam-simaran is His Grace. "At this state" writes Duncan Greenless "the devotee may burst out in a song of Ecstasy that even if he had millions and millions of tongues he would devote them all the ceaseless adoration of the wonderful God, 'Vahi-Guru', keeping His Name ever on them all.[2] So he would travel easily progressing forward, leaving behind plane after plane of the spiritual path till all the five planes on the Mystic way are traversed and till finally the union of the 'atman' with 'parmatman' is firmly established As one progresses on the path one realises the utter powerlessness of one's own efforts, on the one hand, and of all-powerfulness of the gracious He the object of all devotion. For this realisation is the natural outcome of the gradual annihilation the ego and the steady extinction of dualism in the only Super-I-ness, the 'Ahamta' The devotee becomes one with the centre of his devotion. The pilgrim becomes panduranga. Man turns God: A man turned God is a God man, a Mystic.

The Five Planes of spiritual experience

This Path to the Real is, says Nanak, through the four inner planes of spiritual life-the Plane of Law,[3] the Plane of Wisdom,[4] the Plane of Ecstasy[5] and the Plane of Grace.[6] The Real is the final Plane of Truth.[7] Let us have a look in to each one of them, through

1. Nanak Vani, p 94. Japji 32.
2. The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib, p. 256, Duncan Greenless.
3 Nanak Vani, p 96 Japji 34.
4. Ibid., p. 97 Japji 35.
5. Ibid , Japji 36
6. Ibid., pp 97-8 Japji 37.
7. Ibid., Japji 37.

the eyes of Nanak, in order to understand the stage of spiritual progress culminating in the realisation of the ultimate as a result of which the 'ego' withers away like the autumn leaves, never to return on the twigs of the tree fed on the terestrial springs of senses.

DHARMA KHANDA

The Plane of Law

In its 'Homeward Journey'[1] the soul has to traverse successively through the four spiritual planes, the first which, says Nanak, is the 'Dharma Khanda -the plane of law. In order that the soul may return where from it fell in to the body, God has created Earth as a 'dharmashala',[2] that is, an inn where the soul reaps what it sows Here the Law operates with imperceptible and inevitable meticulousness[3] The Law is binding on all and immutable in character; it is the Law of Causalty-of causes and effects. None can escape it save those who practise the recitation of the Name with awe, love and regard and establish communion with the Word. The earth and all life on it are in the power of this Law of Action,[4] including the fire, the wind, the water etc , and all the creatures are judged according to their deeds[5] For, True is the Lord and true is His Court (i e. Law)[6] Immaculate is His Law, but by the Grace of God one may gain the distinction of being honoured in His Court. In other words, the Law of Action, which binds the soul with the bad or good it does, will have no power over it if it ennobles and purifies itself by coming into living contact with the Guru and by heartful meditation on the Divine Name imparted by the Guru.[7] The physical plane, where this Law-operates, is the Earth and "lies between the subtler elemental world and the grosser planes of 'patala',[8] it is ruled by Time and Space under the control of the Lord, and the Saints are the 'Elect' ones in His Court. Nanak says that the 'Elect' ones are the perfect ones and the other creatures are under the power of the Law only to be perfected in due course of time. To quote him: "Kacha Pakai Othe Pai; O Nanak gaia Japai Jai"-that is "the imperfect ones are perfected there; O Nanak! it is there that this mystery is revealed."[9]

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1. Japji, p. 172-by Kirpal Singh.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 96. Japji 34; line 2.
3. Ibid , Japji 3;43.
4. Ibid., Japji 34;4.
5. Ibid.. Japji 34;4.
6. Ibid., Japji 34;4.
7. Ibid , Japji 34.5.
8. Ibid., Japji 34 1.
9. Ibid., Japji 34.6.

The Earth as the Laboratory of Perfection

It is thus the well considered experiential awareness that this Law governed Earth is a veritable laboratory where the raw are ripened or the imperfect are perfected by the devotional communion with the Word in the background of the 'as you sow so shall you reap' theory. The process of ripening starts only after the realisation by man what governs this gigantic universe unseed is a Supreme Being and that the same Supreme Being is the governor of his life from within him too. The body of Man has the semblance of being a miniature form of the universe and the spirit that governs this vast creation is the one that rules the world in the bosom of a human body. The Swetaswatar Upanishad tells us: "The Godhead moves in this Field modifying each web of things separatly in many ways: one, He presides over all wombs and nature; Himself the womb of all He is that which brings into ripeness the nature of the being and He gives to all who have to be matured their result of development and appoints all qualities to their workings".[1] This idea is also confirmed in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad where one recognises that man is, in his unregenerate condition, is at (non-being) 'tamas' (lost in darkness of ignorance), and 'mrita' (a mortal being) and realises the need of rising into the light of 'Sat' (Truth), 'Jyoti' (wisdom) and 'amrita' (immortality) [2] The famous prayer of this Upanishad invokes the blessings of the Supreme Spirit for being led into Perfection. It says: "Lead us from non-being to True Being; Lead us from Darkness to Light; Lead us from Mortality to Immortality."[3]

Quite obviously, therefore, a spiritual evolution—an inward evolution of Man progressively unfolding to him the majesty of the Indwelling Spirit till he identifies himself with It-is the keynote, the centrally significant motive of the terrestrial existence. "If the soul of man is to go beyond humanity", writes Sri Aurobindo "to reach either supramental or a still higher status, it must pass out of this cosmic existence either to a plane or world of Bliss and knowledge or into the unmanifest Eternal and Infinite."[4] The plane of knowledge is what Nanak calls 'Jnana Khand, but before we peep into it, it is important to note, from devotional viewpoint, that there is the Lord before the creation, during the creation as also after the creation, and that to reach Him, the Root of all visible Reality-the causeless cause of all causes-one should through constant and devo-

1. Swetaswatar Upanishad. V.3-5.
2. Brihadaranyaka upanishad 1.3.28.
3. Ibid.
4. The Life Divine, Vol. III Pt. II, Chapter xxiii, p. 987.

tional meditation, rise out of the awarness and limitations of one's physical and cosmic body into the height of the Limitless One. Only when the imperfect are perfected, the mystery of further flights into the higher planes of Reality gradually unfolds itself by way of revelations through God's grace [1] And, the only way through whcih the human souls are perfected is the wholehearted practice of and communion with the Divine Name.

JNANA KHANDA

The Plane of Wisdom

Let us now move forward, with our guide Guru Nanak, into the second plane of the Mystic Path-the plane of wisdom or 'Jnana Khanda' as per Nanak's true experience. Here on this plane Nanak hears the 'rapturous' strains of Melodious song resounding through the whole creation [2] This is the 'plane of bliss'-a plane higher than that of Law-as Sri Aurbindo also calls it [3] Here Nanak experiences a peculiar and unique sort of Joy, for the very conception of Nature with her immaculate and immutable laws, her endless forms and beauties, her unfordable phenomena and countless creations, her unfathomable bountifulness and ineffable variety opens up the dam of joy that floods Nanak's life There is the bewildering and bewitching majesty of her Beauty, in which countless Krishanas, Shivas and Brahman[4] singh ceaselessly the lore of Divine Wisdom. As in the Dharma Khanda the raw souls ripened into divine maturity, so in the Jnana Khanda the ripened souls begin to live in the Light of Divine Wisdom and begin to partake of the power of spiritual enlightenment also. Those who enter this Realm of Knowledge are automatically awakened into the powers of God. This is certainly a sub tler plane than the gross plane of Law, for here the psychic powers of the devotee are sublimated, informed by the intimations of the soul and divinised to grasp the subtler workings of the Divine Scheme of life. Innumerable gods and goddess trot this plane in strict obedience to the Divine Command [5] Innumerable are the suns and the moons:[6] innumerable are the fields of actions, plenary spheres, zones;[7] innumerable are the siddhas, the naths and the accomplished ones in various disciplines of knowledge.[8] The oceans are count-

1. Nanak Vani, p. 96. Japji 34;6.
2. Japji, p. 174—by Kirpal Singh.
3. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Pt. II, chapter xxiii, p. 987.
4. Nanak Vani, p. 97. Japji 35.
5. Ibid , Japji 35; 2;6.
6. Ibid , Japji 35;5.
7. Ibid., Japji 35;5.
8. Ibid., Japji 35;6.

less too and countless are the pearls and rubies.[1] Countless are the mines of life; countless the speeches; countless the sovereigns[2]; countless are the saints and servants of Almighty[3]. "O Nanak ! endless is the end (of divine knowledge).[4] The world of wisdom is both bottomless and boundless.

The spiritual meaning and significance of this vision of wisdom unbound seems to be that if one wants to reach Him, one must not rest content with the wisdom available in the world. The wisdom of the Saints must become the living experience of the devotee himself. "What if Christ or Sainkara realised God"?, roared a God-realised Saint to one of his disciples. ' You should yourself realise what they realised and be what they became thereby." A study of divine lore is useful, but only as a spiritual inciter: for, to study about God is not the same thing as to realise God. One must build a bridge of spiritual experience between recitation of scriptures and realisation of God. The royal way is only through the subtle, silent and sweet tunnel of heartful meditation and soulful contemplation.

By implication, though even mere study of scriptures and spiritual literature is certainly of great value, it is spiritually imperative for the seekers of Godhood that they do not stop at that. By how devotianally a man may go on reciting the stanzas-even of Japji- the epitome and essence of the teachings of Guru Nanak-he will not be able to realise the hidden mysteries of the words till he establishes his firm communion with the Name with devotion and love and regularity par excellence For as Nanak himself says: "it is not by learning the Vedas by heart and reciting the Vedic texts that man becomes dear to God he is honoured in His Court only through devotional meditation on the Divine Name." In this Jnana Khanda the second plane of spiritual experiences-what is important is that there is no end to the knowledge Divine and Nanak, therefore, enjoins upon us again and again that the seekers of the Real must meditate on the Name, and receive the live impulses through the lyrical glances of some Master soul. Here book-knowledge fails to awaken spirituality. This is why each one of us can speak woderfully of spiritual matters, but our actual life betrays not a speck of it,"says Saint Kirpal Singh[5]. Says Nanak: "we may read and read endlessly —but, O ! Nanak, all this simply feeds and fattens the ego

1. Nanak Vani, p. 97. Japji 35;7.
2. Ibid., Japji 35;8.
3. Ibid., Japji 35;9.
4. Ibid., Japji 35;9.
5. Japji, p. 80-by Kirpal Singh.

and is of no avail-"[1] It is, therefore, highly desirable and necessary that he who wishes to seek the Truth must seek the company of the Saints i.e. of those who have known the Truth and can also enable others to know It through communion with the Word. For, the Truth resides in every man's heart and saints are the Master Souls who have realised It within and without and everywhere.[2]

Commenting on this very plane of Wisdom, Duncan Greenless writes that "It is the realm of innumeriable beings built of 'astral' or radiant matter, the 'spirits' of the departed and of the unborn—the invisible helplers---Initiates, Masters and Adepts labouring among men on earth. Here--the soul gradually learns to see the One, and so—is slowly purged of ancient ignorance" This commentary brings out, in the last sentence, two points of great importance One, that the meditator experiences on this plane the oneness of the Absolute Being. This experience is quite in confirmity with the mystical tradition of ancient saints and seers of India "Ekoham Dvitiyo Nasti" - "I am one without a second. Secondly, that with awakening of this wisdom in the meditator's heart, he is freed-of course slowly and step by step-from his ancient ignorance." The word 'ancient' is significant, For it refers to the ages past of ignorance as a result of which the soul has been migrating from womb to womb. Several devotees have reached this stage and are imparting knowledge to those who come in their contact. The current of learning goes on streaming forth with the waters of sparkling beauty. Behind the rich colourful variety is seen on this plane the principle of unity working both eternally and invisibly. Only those on the Plane of wisdom can and do know this-Says Nanak, with this new vision and wisdom there comes joy and with the Guru's Word the mind acquires peace."[3] The heartful meditation on the Name is, therefore, the unfolder of the Divine Wisdom of 'IK Onkar' Sat Nam

SARAMA KHANDA

The Plane of Ecstasy

There is thus on the plane of wisdom the powerful play of the electrifying knowledge,[4] electrifying in two senses. It burns up the dross of ancient ignorance and illumines the heart of man with Light Divine. There, in the illumination, some recreate, some enjoy and others live lost in the music of the Word-"Tithe Naad Vinod

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 335. Rag Asa Var Sloka M.1.
2. Ibid., p. 773. Rag Malar Var M 1.
3. Ibid , p 673. Tukhari. M.1. Bara Mah.
4. Ibid., p. 97, Japji 36;1.

Kou Anandu."[1] Those few fortunate souls that are joyfully in tune with the lore of the Eternal (i.e, Word), get a jump for a flight further deep in side. There they enter the plane of Ecstasy where "utterance Divine" is the Queen Power-"Saram Khand Ki Vaani Rupu"[2] So far, below this plane, was sound reverberating in penta-gon form- 'pancha shabda Dhunikar, Dhuni Tah Baje Sabad Nisanu'-the five forms of sound emanating as if from (1) 'Strings or Chords, (2) leather (3) metal (4) pots and (5) blowing[3] Now on this plane, the sound is getting crystalized into speech Automatically there gush forth from the mouth of the meditator, on this plane divine utterances of pure ecstasy. Uniquely, the Words pour out in profusion in the form of enchanting poetry which when heard (or read now) inspire the ordinary beings to follow the path; songs in God's glory are instantaneously chiselled out from the devotee's throat entirely unpremeditated way and form Nanak Says: "There everything is minted in unique profusion"- 'tithe ghadaeti ghadia bahut anoopu'.[4] Marvellous in the mint on this plane. God speaks through the meditator, the devotee That is why the Vedas, the Bible, the Sacred Koran, the Holy Guru Granth Sahib etc , are regarded as Divine utterances None can discern and describe them and their import through barren intellect. whoever tries to do so" says, Nanak, "must rep nt his folly"-'Je Ko Kahe Pichhe Pachhatahi.[5] The only thing the human beings should do is to understand these divine utterances, take them as ideals to achieved and incessantly toil toward their realisation And this they can understand only by and through the agency of those who are working on the plane of Wisdom-the second stage on the Mystic Path. For, the Divine utterance has the power to attract, illumine and emancipate. The wise ones know it, but even they can not describe the 'why' of it.

It is on this plane(तिथै) the third stage on the Path to the Real that the mind (मनि), the intellect (बुधि), the view (मति) the concentration are divinized-tithe ghadie Surati, mati, mani buddhi,[6] - in the sense that all these faculties of human mind are placed in the power of the Word, as a result of dedicational and devotional meditation, and are pressed and pushed into illuminational ecstasies by the power of the Word quite graciously. The Word

1. Nanak Vani, p. 97, Japji 36: 1
2. Ibid., Japji 36; 2.
3. Ibid , p. 773. Malar Var Sh. 21. M 1.
4. Ibid., p. 97. Japji 36;2.
5. Ibid., Japji 36;3
6. Ibid., p. 97 Japji 36;4.

manifests itself by minting Words of mystic import for the good of the mundane beings: It speaks through the devotees of this stage. All the utterances of the sages and seers are spontaneous outpowerings of the souls in ecstatic communion with the Word. Nanak says- "tithe ghadie sura sidhi ki sudhi." There is chiselled the ambrosial juice (Sura). The Word, here, opens up, inside the devotee's mind, an ever trickling stream of Nectar which he drinks to the brim and bathes in it. The Fount of Nectar is created and naturally all the words that well up from within are drenched in nectar. The devotee's utterances on this plane are sweeter than honey-they certainly have that effect provided people appreciate them and act accordingly, they are the drops of Ambrosia surging up from the Sacred Fount (Amritsar) within. It is because of this that Nanak further sings out in this very vein that there is chiselled "sidhi ki sudhi" i e., the divine wisdom of using the power (Sidhi).

By implication, the experience of those who have fallen-from the mystical heights tells us, that the adept ones (Siddhas) may degenerate by abusing the power they acquire by spiritual practices. But once the devotees enter the plane of Ecstasy and make themselves homely in their stay there, their intellect becomes illumined and gets transformed by the very touch of Ambrosial drops into intuition (Sudhi). Man, the mortal, grows into immortality. The self comes to its own. The Rigveda regards men as childern of Nectar (मानवा अमृतस्य पुत्रा:). The self resolves into self, and develops the penetration of the gods, the sages and the seers. This is thus the divine spell of the Word on this plane. This is the experience of a very high kind whereby the devotee is thoroughly divinized. He becomes fit to receive the Grace at an extraordinary higher plane and to transmit the same, as per God's will on to the lovers of the Lord.

This stage of the Godward journey is representative of the soul's spiritual endeavour (सरस) of the highest excellence. At the ending or pinnacle of this stage man sits at the pinnacle of his pilgrimage and God is moved to admit him into His Chamber of Grace. He gets a glimpse of God, the Beloved, in all the Divine splendour and Grace which no human mind can conceive and no human tongue can convey. He is overcome by the vision of God in its immaculate Beauty of His Person-'beauteous eyes', "sparkling teeth", "sharp nose", "luxurious hair", "lustrous body cast in gold with a rosary like Krishna's", "graceful gait", "alluring youth"[1] and spontaneously sings out :

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 373. Rag Vedahansi Chhand 2-7 M.1.

"Graceful is Thy gait, O Lord! Sweet Thy speech Like a Koel's; alluring is Thy youth; yea, alluring is Thy youth—— Prayeth Nanak, I am Thy slave, O Lord; For Graceful is Thy gait and Sweet Thy Speech.".[1]

The Beauteous Form of God thus flashed upon Nanak's Inward Eye, stayed there for a while and disappeared. Nanak could not bear the vanishing of the vision His heart began to painfully anguish and aspire for His vision again. The union of the soul with the Lord was as Ecstatic and hillarious as was agonizing and heart rending the soul's disunion from His embrace. Gone is the Bridegroom. The Bride can not live without Him. Her soul cries out in utter agony with sleepless nights, curses her fate and finally prays for sleep to come so that He may be seen at least in dream. What else can a foresaken lady do? So shrieks out Nanak's soul at this stage: "Break thy cosy sleep and the ivory bracelets, O woman ! and thy arms, yea, the arms of thy bed—————" The arms that girdle not the Lord's neck, O burnt be those arms[2]. Having cursed the devastating forlorn-ness, the love lorn Bride (Nanak i.e. Jeevat, the pilgrim) pants for sleep in a state of utter helplessness: O fortunate sleep come unto me. May be, I get a glimpse of Him in sleep." The fire of separation augments the pilgrim's devotion all the more and his yearning for final union with the Beloved Lord becomes immesurably intense. Through this Darknight of the soul, the pilgrim, with increased devotional meditation on the Name, prepares for a still higher flight, transcending the plane of speech, Ecstasy or Beauty to the planes that lie ahead. The Guru is with him and his feeling of reverence, faith and gratitude for teacher deepens all the more, and thus with greater intensity and patience he resumes his upward journey. It merits a mention with special emphasis as to how the pilgrim who has the vision of God with Form on this plane of Ecstasy where the Beauty Divine is sung out in speech-for speech is the Ruling Power on this plane-strides further on to the experience of the Formless God in the plane of Truth via Karama Khanda The devotee is pursuaded to affirm his belief that only through real and perfect saguno-pasana, (the worship of God with form or attributes) the Royal Way for Nirgunopasana (the worship of the formless God, the Pure Consciousness, Truth) can be laid. Certainly, indeed, the nirgunopasana which is of subtler and higher kind than that of the Sagunopasana,

1. Nanak Vani, p. 2-8 Rag. Vadahansa Chhand 2-7 M. 1.
2. Ibid., p. 369, Rag Vadahansa M.1.

is attainable only when the soul rises higher and higher by leaving behind the plane of Ecstasy ruled by the Power Speech.

KARAMA KHANDA

The plane of Grace

Higher than the 'Sarma Khanda'—the plane of Ecstasy—is thus the realm of Grace where the soul of the devotee stands face to face with God and is overcome by joy serene. Here the soul, by God's Grace, is in the position of identifying itself with the Almighty, of becoming one with Him The term 'Karam' associated with this plane, is highly significant. Ordinarily, it means 'Action' in Hindi vocabulary and 'Grace' in urdu language. The beauty in the use of this term by Nanak lies in the fact that it embraces both the meanings in right perspective it is the plane of 'Grace', in the sense that only here the Grace of God is experienced in perfect purity of thought, speech and conduct; it is the plane of Action because it is only here that the devotee is enabled to make his surrender absolute at the feet of God; and this deed of self-surrender is the highest kind of Action any devotee is capable of performing For, this is the only action that emancipates instead of enchaining the soul into the Law of Karma. Herein is the Grace of God in full operation. The act of self-surrender in want of Grace is unthinkable, and Grace makes self-surrender perfectly full and pure. Grace is an act of God. Self surrender is an act of devotee. But in the very act of surrender the devotee identifies himself with God and sees Him eye to eye and immediately merges in Him as the river does in the ocean. The oneness is established, the Truth is glimpsed and lived in all its colourful effulgence. Self reaches the Self and rests there in joy serene and peace ineffable.

Fearlessness is the first gift of Grace there and the devotee, in unison with the Lord, shares power with Him. Nanak sings out: "The keynote of the plane of Grace is power",[1] as the keynote of the plane of Ecstasy is Beauty.[2] In plain words, this is the realm of those who have merged in God, the Great ones whose actions are charged with omnipotent grace. Everything they do is filled with love and Grace. They are on the summit of spiritual achievement, the Brave and the Fearless and the All Powerful ones in the eternal and inalienable oneness with God. They alone are selfless because they have realised the Self. They alone are Great

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1. Nanak Vani, p 97. Japji 37; 1.
2. The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib. p. 259, Duncan Greenless.

because they are right in the heart of God. They alone are the Brave ones because they are graced with the omnipotence of God. Nanak says: "Here the Word is all in all and nothing else prevails. Here dwell the barvest of the barves, the conquerors of the mind, whose inmost heart are brimming with Ram (tin mahi Ram Rahia Bharpoora) i.e, the love Divine Here dwell devotees with devotion incomparable as Sita's."[1]

Mint of Mystics

The meaning is that the devotees who ascend to such pinnacle point of mystical hills alone are united in the power and Grace of God and that they become as great deliverers of human kind as Rama and as great devotees of the Lord as Sita. Here in this plane of Grace thus the devotees become power, Beauty and Grace incarnate. Their meditational process is crowned with Peace and Perfection and they become Purity personified. They become the never-ending dynamos of spiritual power and grace in mobile human forms and can acting upon the Lord's Will, pull up the aspirants of God to the heights they have themselves scaled. They are the Magnetic Masters of what is called the 'Bhringiyoga', for they are in themselves, at this stage, the mints where mystics are moulded and made They are the moving Refulgent Lights of the Infinite and can re-light the blown out lamps in the human heart hungry of divine dispensation They are quite fit and perfect ones to see the Truth in its pure effulgence.

SACHA KHANDA

The plane of truth

Only the perfect ones reach the plane of Truth, the seat of the formless one. There is no past, no future, but all epitomed in to the Eternal Present All time and all space is a point in Him. He creates the cosmos from this plane and watches the creation from His seat in the heart of every living being. He creates, He watches, He acts, He preserves, He destroys He is in the creation, before the creation, after the creation. He is Timeless and Spacelss, but both Time and Space are bound in Him by His Will. Here He is beyond the power of anyone to describe. How can the Infinite and Eternal be reduced to expressions in the finite and ephemeral vocabulary ? He manifests Himself to His devotees on the planes of their devotion, but He remains in this sacha khanda in His formless and unmanifest state of pure Truth. Herefrom everything—the dead and the dynamic, the unmoving and the mov-

1. Nanak Vani, p. 97. Japji 37-1 to 8.

ing—emanates; hereunto all return to eternally rest. He is the beginning, but He Himself has no beginning. He is the end, but He is endless. Everything is in Him. He is.

Vision of Parama Pada

Such is the Abode of the Almighty having reached where, there is no return.[1] Lord Krishna tells us in Srimadbhagwad Gita: Tad dham, paramam Mam.[2] 'That is my supreme abode'. Clearly, there is no plane higher than this one; it is the highest of all the planes. Here the spiritual journey reaches its highest summit; nothing remains to be climed hereafter. There is no herebefore, no hereafter; here is everything. Such is the 'padamavyayam' of the Purushottam, Nanak says: "He who is blessed with this vision, rejoices in its contemplation," and adds in the same breath "such is the Beauty that to try to describe it is to attempt the impossible"[3] (Kathana karta saru)—telling is as hard as iron. The great mystic poet Kabir also sings out a similar note when he says: "Hear, O, Ye Sadhus ! This state is indescribable. Only He who knows this is both the Guru and the disciple," all eyes are dazzled, all ears get dumb, all skin is benumbed everything becomes senseless. His sense lives. He sees, He hears, He speaks, He feels, He touches. He is the Doer. He is the Destiny, the Truth, the Truth of Truths satyasya satyam. Such is the plane of Truth whereinto bloom and terminate all the spiritual disciplines and all the paths get dissolved. Man, on the Mystic Path, on this plane is transfigured into Godman. God, not grave, is the goal. Here the self comes to its own. The pilgrimage ends. Grace alone works. God is.

SUMMING UP

To sum up : the mystical journey begins with the intense yearning and love of God crowned by the Grace of Guru whose given Word the pilgrim repeats with love, faith and reverence. The journey strides on the strength of heartful meditation and soulful contemplation, leaving behind different planes of spiritual experiences, till it dissolves into its Destination—God, the Truth. Its first halt is on the plane of Law where cosmic Rhythm of life and the panoramic creation instills a mysterious shudder in the pilgrim's heart. He enjoys the shudder more and more as the fear of God deepens ever more as a consequence of (1) the realisation of the present of the

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1. Bhagwat Gita, Chapter XV. 4. यद्गत्वा न निवर्त्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ।
2. Ibid.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 97. Japji 37.

creator behind this wonder-evoking colourful creation and (2) the identification of the rhythmic cosmic beat with the rhythmic beat in his own heart. This realisation and identification evolves out of the fire of repentence for having not remembered God so far. Here the pilgrim gets enrolled in this school of perfection by the Grace of the Guru and earns, by deeper and devotional communion with the Word, a spiritual passport to enter the higher planes of divine experiences. Taking off from the plane of Law, he (jeeva) enters 'via purgativa' the plane of Wisdom where the divine music releases unique spiritual energy in the form of sound which "rings in his heart" ceaselessly and then he sings out : "Night and day, O Lord, I am athirst for Thee. Give water of Thy mercy to Nanak : He is like a sarang, the hawk-cuckoo, that drinks only rain drops, so that he may dwell ever in the peace of Thy Name." Here, on this plane there dawns illumination divine on the pilgrim's heart and through this second opening he reaches via illuminative' the next plane of Ecstasy the saram khand, where the vision of the immaculate Beauty of the form of God throws him into trance. The mystic bliss of his unison with the Beloved Lord is sung out in Words beyond mortal's capacity of coin. Here he lives in the power of speech as there, on the second plane, lived in the power of sound Here the pilgrim takes his spiritual Bath at the Sacred Fount within and is perfected in the worship of God with form and whereafter when the form disappears and his yearning for Him touches the unbearable boiling pitch, he is lifted by Guru's Grace who invisibly guides him up above that plane on to the plane of Grace, the Karama Khanda. There the absolute self-surrender of the pilgrim soul is matched and blessed by Pure Grace of the Supreme Soul, the Almighty Both get united in the cosy embrace of God. The sublimest revelations of the Lord sanctify the body, mind and soul of the pilgrim Here is the mystical life at its zenith. Here in this state "the perfect soul begets—like God himself—beautiful thoughts and beautiful virtues "says Plotinus [1] St. John of the Cross teaches that "in a truly mystical life, a knowledge of God and His attritutes overflows into the understanding from the contact with Him, and the soul is admitted to the knowledge of wisdom and grace, and the gifts and powers of God, whereby it is made so beautiful and rich " (Cant 14 16 24 2)[2] Here, the self-surrender is so complete that the devotee's will gets subsumed into the Divine Will. Here the egoless obedience to God's schedule is at its peak. Certainly, the divine love of the devotee is at its climax, and the divine

1. Enneds 6.9.9.
2. Quoted in Pathway to God in Hindi Literature by Prof. R.D. Ranade, p 6.

grace is at its fullest point. In the joyous junction of these two 'via unitiva' is further opened up the Gateway to God's inmost dwelling; The Plane of Truth is reached. The 'unio mystica' is established The devotee, with his devotion, meditation and contemplation, is for ever locked up in the Lord's heart. The distance between the devotee and the object of devotion is now no more. Destiny of devotion is attained. Oneness blooms forth : Is-ness dawns. He is. And thus has the soul risen, climbing the steps of the mystical ladder, with Guru's grace and guidance, to the Home it belongs. The river has reached the heart of the ocean and become one with it The Homeward journey is over. The Root is reached. Atman is Parmatman. Nanak Is.

Nanak, in that God-drunk state of the highest spiritual heights, enjoins upon the aspirants of the ocean of ambrosial Truth to practise chastity and purity of thought, speech and conduct; to develop patience. perservance and do devotional meditation with faith and fortitude; to annihilate desires and insure equilibrium of mind by Reason pure and sublime; to progressively augment the practice of the Word with loveful heart; to develop faith, awe, love, and reverance for God, feel His presence at a live level and develop a feeling of gratitude for Guru, and to practise spiritual fearlessness and renunciation and to love Him i e., repeat his Name with such an intensity that he alone is seen and served in all Names and Forms as a result of which his soul is melted into the shape of the King i.e., God Himself In most beautiful and divinely melodious way Nanak sings out this advice thus: "Make chastity your furnace, patience your smithy, The Master's Word your anvil and True knowledge (Vedu) your hammer. Make Awe of God your bellows and with it burn the fire of Austerity, And in the crucible of Love, melt the Nectar Divine. Only in such a Mint, can Man be cast into the Word. But they alone who are favoured by Him, can take unto this Path. O Nanak, on whom He glances with Grace, He fills with everlasting Peace."[1]

In this meditational hymn Nanak has lined out the distant path ahead of us all, but assures us of our achieving the goal of God-realisation by practically following the path The flight to the Real is not a metaphysical flight into a dreamland of the Absolute, but a real good practical journey into God who is. And, for the journey Nanak wants us to make a thorough preparation. One must aspire, toil austerely and incessantly repeat the Divine Name round the clock; and practise patience, fortitude, fearlessness,

1. Nanak Vani, p. 98. Japji 38.

renunciation with purity of heart and spiritual enlightenment so that one may be able to receive the Grace of God and be a Mystic par excellence. The ascending love of God and a life of virtuous austerity on the part of the aspirant is very necessary for the Grace of God to descend and make a mystic of man. Not aspiration and effort alone, not Grace alone, but Grace enabling the aspirant's efforts constitute the heart and soul of the Mystical Journey.

5

The Mystic

A mystic is 'Word' personified and fruitioned in human form. No words from any vocabulary of mortals can define or describe him. He is as mysterious to mundane beings as God Himself is. Only a mystic is needed to mirror a mystic, and that too in his own measure. The language of such mystical mirroring is solemn visioning of the Light by the Light. Silence is the name. Silence rendered blissful and blessed in the indivisible unison of Spirit.

It is the silence of the senses as a natural consequence of the royal and resp'endant manifestation of the majestic glory and the miraculous incomprehensibility of the Word which reverberates within[1] the inmost recesses of the Godman's heart, the inner divine music in its unstruck form. A mystic is a God-man, drunk deep in the Divine Name[2], ever awake[3] in the solemn oneness with the Brahman, ever alert in the sanctifying Presence of the Gracious He, and blissfully ever agile in His eternal sport on the high and holy grounds of Infinity. He is in the true sence of the term perfection of divinity incarnate in moving, talking human bones, flesh and veins. He knows and lives boundlessness, for there is nothing in his eye now what he, as an aspirant, once used to know and call 'within' and 'without'. All limits are transcended, all heights scaled, all depths gauged, all dimensions measured-such is the state of a mystic who has perfected himself in the art of being one with the limitless, the illimitable. Only such a mystic bears testimony to something that once seemed to him to be both 'within' ('antaryamin,' the immanent) and 'without' ('bahiryamin,' the transcendent Beyond); for, now, he has lost his small, separative, isolated identity as an individual human being and is now 'at one-ment' with the One, Ifinite, Eternal Truth- the Root, the Return, and the Rest of all that Is.[4] Only such a mystic is a living embodiment of the summits and substance of spiritual life; of sublime simplicity; of solace-giving peace; of true love, light and purity. A mystic, as an ideal saint, is both the essence and epitome of godly goodness and grace and, as such, serves as an eye opener

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1. Nanak Vani, p. 108, Sri Rag M.1. Sabad
2. Ibid., p. 789, Rag Perbhati vi bhas M.1, Chaupadi 16/3.
3. Ibid., p. 683,, Rag Tukhari M.1.
4. Ibid., p., 544, Rag Ram Kali M. 1., Sidh Goshti 51.

and guide to all those who seek Light Divine. To follow such a saint, is to be able to find God in one's own self as permeating every-where, far beyond the bounds of space and time.

Such a mystic is a phenomenon common to all cults and communities dedicated to the cause of Truth or search of God. At all places and in all times such mystics have been the pride treasures of humanity, fearless leaders of mankind from the slavery of senses to the freedom of spirit, powerful messengers of Truth and solacing Gospel to the tormented humanity, divine deliverers of the forlorn and forgetful humanity lost in the trade of flesh, ego and duality. A mystic is the golden gift of God to the praying God-Cravers, and the pity is that the people donot realise that God is speaking through him. The Sun of Reality shines forth from within the eyes, words and works of such mystics who are His elected ones. But only they who choose to seek Him have the divine blessing to appreciate this Sun-shine of the Absolute perfect He "How very wonderful", writes the philosopher-Saint Prof. R. D Ranade, "that while the Sun makes the phenomenal world rise into view, the Sun of Absolute Reality makes the phenomenal world hide its face altogether? He eats up the stars in the shape of both knowledge and ignorance and brings on illumination to those who seek self knowledge".[1]

This Sun of Reality speaks through the mystics of unimaginable spiritual heights for the solace and satisfaction of the hearts hungry of God-realization. It is through such saints that the spiritual Sun rises in the firmament of an aspiring heart And, it is "at the dawn of the spiritual light that the individual souls, like birds, leave their nests on their spiritual pilgrimage"[2], says Prof Ranade. He continues to tell: "The Sun of Absolute Reality throws out rays of discrimination, which falling on the double concave mirror of consciousness, burn to ashes the forests of worldly life. When the rays of the sun of Absolute Reality fall straight on the soul, a mirage of occult powers is produced, when the Sun reaches the zenith of spiritual experience, the aspiring soul feels its individuality hides itself underneath itself, like the shadow of a body at mid day Who is there who has been able to visualize this Sun of Absolute Reality, who is beyond day and night, beyond good and bad, beyond all pairs of opposites, who is like an eternal lamp of light, which burns so miraculously that there is nothing to illuminate?"[3]

1. Mysticism in Maharashtra by R. D. Ranade, p. 70.
2 Ibid , p. 70.
3. Quoted from "Thus spake Gurudeva" by M.S. Deshpande p. No. 96.

Only the mystics are blessed to visualize the Sun of Absolute Reality and to enable the seekers to have the same vision of that Reality.[1] This is how the great saint of Maharashtra, Tukaram, speaks of a saint. A Saint is he who has seen and can show God to the seeker. He is a perennial fount of joy, peace and grace. Through him the grace of God descends on the aspiring soul, and only through the grace all spiritual endeavours originate and fructify. The saint of mystic is the only sovereign medium through which the labouring individual souls establish their connection and commune with the perfect One. He holds the key to God and delivers it only to the soul, yearning for His vision. In becoming the medium the mystic is known as Guru and the aspiring soul whom he connects with God by the Word, the Divine Name, is called the Shisya i e., the disciple, and thus it is that the mystic is the focal and the final point of all spiritual life and traditions in the kingdom of God. He is the inevitable link between the God-craving Souls and the Grace-bestowing God. No Guru, No God.[2] If that be so, as it is so, then it is very necessary to have a thorough view of what a mystic is,what he does, how he behaves, what role has he to perform in the regeneration of man and liberation of souls from the wheel of wombs, what service if any, does he render to human society and of several such things. But before we attempt to delineate the role and characteristics of a Saint as propounded by Nanak it is very proper and needful to point out that though a mystic is "a phenomenon common to all religions,"[3] he is a rare spiritual gem of men and he is rarely understood by common people. Rare, indeed, are men devoted to mystical life in modern times. Rarer are those who have climbed mystical heights and commune with God tirelessly. Rarer still are those who have realized[4] their self and see God everymoment every where. Rarest are those who having seen God can show Him to His seekers. Nanak was one amongst such rarest gems of my stical life, standing in the holiest spiritual line of Yajanavalkya, Veda Vyas, Vashistha, Shankeracharya, Kabir and Jnaneswar. In order to have a clear picture of such Masters of the Mystic Path, let us, at least from pure academic point of view, take a summary view of whatever characteristics such Mystics have manifested in their living and bearing, in their utterances and acts. All such characteristics are, from the viewpoint of clearer and easy understanding, divisible in to three broad categories : the mystical, the moral, and the general charact-

1. Nanak Vani p. 544. Rag Ram Kali M.I. Sidh Goshti 57. 1.
2. The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib p. 87. Rag Asa Astpadi 18:4.
3. Prof. R D. Ranade. Pathway to God in Kannada Literature, p. 121.
4. Nanak Vani p. 791. Rag Prabhati Vibhas M.1. Aspadi 7/8.

eristics. Let us deal with them one by one so that we may, in the end, be able to arrive at the picture of Nanak as a Master Mystic and of the Mysticism he practised and preached.

The Mystical characteristics of a Saint

The Ineffability

As already pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, a mystic is beyond description and definition, at least for those many millions of human beings who have chosen only to carve out their material destiny by their own might of mind and arms. Even they who are novice on the mystic path find it difficult to talk about a mystic and if they do so they do only at the peril of revising their view at a later time. As far as the gross worldly beings are concerned a mystic is to them often an enigma, a riddle. Common man is ever prove to judge any other man only on the basis of his outer behaviour, and there lies the rub. A mystic, in his supramental state, lives in a manner which changes from moment to moment-sometimes smiling, sometimes weeping, sometimes making gestures ordinarily unintelligible to people of common rut, sometimes brusting with laughter, at times with anger, so on and so forth and, as such, the onlookers are apt to observe the obvious incongruities in the mystic's behaviour. This surfacial incongruity is enough to give people the idea of mystic being an eccentric fellow, which he is not. Even a philosopher, lost in his musings, is half mad in ordinary man's view, what can a mystic be to him then, lost as he is in the contemplation of the vision of God in its multiple forms producing multiple reactions in his mode of speaking, seeing and doings. As a matter of fact, the mystic lives as a denizen of the Divine World and the citizens of this human world-living mostly at sub human level-have neither the measure nor the mind to portray the mystic in a proper perspective. He is head and shoulders above them. He is truly speaking neither an enigma nor an eccentric figure. He is in the true centre of life in midst the ocean of death, a divinely perfected personality much beyond the ken of ordinary intellect and imagination of the mortals. The seeming incongruity in mystic's life apart, let us fix our attention on That which makes him sit at the apex of spiritual experiences and mystical life. A saint is a saint beyond human intellect's judgment and justification, but the truly religious at heart have many things to speak of the mystical bearing of a Saint. Let us have a glimpse of master mystics through the eyes of the mystics of excellently high order, for they have sung of the mystic's state from the heights of mystical life.

Though whatever is revealed of a mystic's personality in these

meditational songs of the saints is only a pregnant aphorism or idiom, it is possible to surmise a mystic's caricature in rough and dim lines.

Lost in God, Mystical Silence

The first and foremost characteristic of a Master Mystic or an Ideal Saint, as Dr. V.H. Date calls him, is that he is ever contemplative and lost in the vision of God. He is God-drunk. And, in that state of divine drunkenness he is forgetful of the world around him and of his own body. He lives in Him, the Pure Consciousness, the Abode of Perfect Peace. He stands on the sublime summits of silence. Only the music of Name reverberates in his cadavre on the chords of his soul; only the vision of God flashes forth and lives in the frame of his inner eye. When the heart is filled with the Name and the soul with God, what can one speak. His throat gets choked with brimming emotion, tongue is too drenched in the ambrosia of the Word to lift itself in utterance, lips are sealed in the wedlock of soul with the Soul. Silenee is the epoche. Only in the moments of occasional retreats from such a wedlock the soul of the mystic sings out reflectively as in the case of Mystic Kabir, "Man mast hau to kya bole" -what utterance can there be when the mind is under the toxin of the Nectar Name ? Nanak sings aloud in a similar vein:

> "Lips are sealed and tongue tied,
> Only he whom He Graces knows;
> Day and Night is he lost in Love (of His Name)
> He alone is Man who is one with Truth (God)."[1]

Again,

> "In my heart is the joy of His song;
> In the embrace of the Beloved,
> I feel lost in Him."[2]

In this state of being lost in the sublime contemplation of the vision Divine, mystical silence is the only truth. Here, in this spiritual silence, rises up the perfect unity of the mystical triad-the concrete Name, abstract God and the human Guru.[3] All merge in to each other, become One, and in that music of mystical union, silence reigns supreme. Here is the devotion at its sublimest Advaitie peak; the soul sports in unison with the soul.[4] Here is,

1. Nanak Vani, P. 749, Rag Malar, M.1. Gh. 2. 6/5.
2. Ibid., Rag Ramkali. 931.
3. Guru Nanak, p. 7 -quoted by S. K. Ramchandra Rao.
4. Ib.

at its highest ground, the holy unitive life of Pure Love. This is the life of identity at super-level, a level beyond which there is no other level of this realisation of identity. It is from this life of identity of the self in the finite human frame with the Supreme Self which is Infinite and Absolute in essence that the creative self-revelations proceeds. Nanak's Divine utterances belong to this category of self-expression. In silence of the senses the soul of the mystic sings out sweet and rhythmic melodies of divine ring, without compeer.

Such is the beauty of mystic silence of one who is lost in the contemplation of God. True, indeed, why should the soul-swan of a mystic roam about from pond to pond when the fountain of the elixir of life is opened up before him? Saint Kabir says with divine serenity and satisfactions : "Hansa paye Man Sarovar, Tal Talaiya kyon Dole?" The satisfaction at worldly level is noisy and man runs for it more and more from one source to the other, but the satisfaction of a Saint, which grows out of the devotional meditation of the Divine Name which silences the senses with natural ease, is of a supramental level where, having once reached, the mystic gains the supreme repose and blessedness of life and need not move from there to any place for any other satisfaction. The soul reaches whereto it really belongs and from where there is no further flight nor any return. In this mystical silence of the senses there lies the 'mansarovar' the source of supreme satisfaction and the abode of abiding rest, joy and peace. This is an oasis of the self in the Sahara of senses. So is a Saint a centre of solace to the suffering humanity. Nanak's mystical silence is not the silence of the cave-yogins cut apart from the stream of life, but the contemplative silence of the senses that opens up vivid and various avenues of true happiness in this very material life of worldly existence And Nanak's mystic, like Nanak himself, is not at all a forest-dweller, far away from the din and bustle of the world of the mundane mortals.

Continuous Life in the Supramental state: "Sada Unmani Rahani"

In this spiritual garden, rare in the waterless ocean of the senses, the heart of the mystic, when firmly fixed, feeds itself on ambrosial juice of the fruit given by God in the form of Name through the medium of the Guru. He drinks the juice to the extent of losing the consciousness of his own body, his surroundings, and of everything else. Only the Name that echoes in his own heart, he bears; only the vision that flashes forth before his vision he sees.

And, as the meditation deepens and contemplation reaches it clear acme, of which inaccessible heights the Master Mystics alone are the divine gainers, a sort of spiritual liquor is produced which the mystic drinks to his full and easily gets intoxicated. Before his eyes, in that stage, only one thing glitters-and it glitters in a sublimely soothing way-the spiritual gold coin, on which is set the love-seal of the DivineName [1] Of that gold-coin is begotten fromGod the mellifluous fruit of deep devotion; from that fruit oozes out the divine juice sweeter than anything conceivable as the sweetest of drinks in the world of man. "To the Saints nothing is sweet without Him, All other pleasures are insipid",[2] that juice the mystic drinks incessantly and with never slaking thirst from his own cup of devotional love; and that drinking makes him rapidly cross the barriers of Mind and reach, via intermediary stages[3] already discussed, the Realm of Truth[4] where he lives lost in the Life of Divine Love at its highest point. Ordinary people may mistake him as a mad man, but he is one with the cosmic stream of Pure Consciousness where the Sun of Truth Eternal shines ad infinitum. He looks struck with lunacy, but he is in his "unmani" or "sahaj samadhi" state of supra-mental existence. Who else than a saint of his own type can appreciate and understand him ?

In this 'unmani' life par excellence, the mystic is ever awake, ever agile, all knowing and ever participating in the sport of God. He lives the fulfilment of life; he is the Blissful, the Blessed and Elected One of the Ik Omkar, the Truth. There in that state there is no expectation, no anxiety, no aspiration, even no thought of anything at all. The Mystic is thus himself a Wish-fulfilling Tree the 'Kalp-Taru', and to see him is to see the Seer of God, may God in human form! That, too, is in itself a great merit, for rare is such a love-lorn divine soul lost in the Music of Name within. He is the sea of spirituality poured and abridged in a mortal human frame. In such a state of holy one-ness, whatever the mystic perceives is nothing but the peerless vision of the Supreme Self, God; whatever he speaks is the Gospel of God; whatever he does is the sublimest Worship of the Self; whatever he sings out is a Holy Prayer. Where ever he glances, he sees the vision Divine and finds God pervading all every time. He is ecstatic, ever calm and composed, sublime and serene like a pacific ocean. He is ever cheerful, and even when he lies down in a state of physical rest, his superconscious condition

1. Nanak Vani, Japji 38-Jai Ram Mishra.
2. Message of Sikhism, p. 66 Guru V, Jaitsri Rag-Harbansingh
3. Nanak Vani, Japji 34, 35, 36 and 37.
4. Ibid., Japji 37.

-Unmani Avastha'-is not at all disturbed. Is it possible in such a perfect unison of the soul with the Super-soul to prattle about metaphysical theories or philosophies? He is himself philosophy, for he lives it. What is the use of philosophy if it is not lived? Why also babble about philosophy if it is lived in full? A Saint is the perfect embodiment of the philosophy of philosophy. ' Sing it in living", is the import of the ecstatic utterance of Saint Kabir: "Kah Kabir yah unmani Rahani, so pargat Kari Gai."[1] That state is the highest one-the paramavastha-of a mystic's life in which he lives lodged till the final fall of the mortal coil. He lives drunken in the divine wine of Eternity, the True Wine for which production Nanak exhorts all the beings of the human race,[2] irrespective of caste, color, sex or creed. Blessed, indeed, are they who seek and secure the company of such saints Blissful, indeed, are they who follow the path shown and divinely seen by the Saints[3] The truth, however, is that "he to whom God is merciful finds the society of the saints."[4] A mystic is thus "the highest of the high, the purest of the pure" because "in his heart God resides".[5] He is himself the holy flame of God in flesh, blood and bones. Even the vision of this flame is blissful.

Beyond Attributes i.e. "Gunatita" or "Nistraigunyavastha"

Since God is beyond this creation of the three-fold 'gunas'-sattva, rajas and tamas-the mystic, the God-man, is also a co-sharer with Him in His 'nistraigunyavastha'. For the soul of the mystic, in its supra-mental state, is totally cut off from its connection with the world, is completely dissociated from the earthliness of the body and mind, and is in Its original pure transcendent as well as immanent state of super-consciousness. The mystic is indubitably a perfect lotus in human guise, for though he lives in the mirk of the world he is not of the world. The entire surroundings in which he moves, breathes and lives, is in the power of the triune of the qualities (त्रिगुणात्मिका सृष्टि), but he has, by the force of the Divine Name, by the Grace of the Guru and by the Will of God, transcended the limitations of these three gunas and reached Him where these gunas have no reach inspite of the fact that the gunas emanate from Him and rest in Him. Only when there is the perfect union of the soul with the supersoul that the former is perfectly dissociated from the

1. Quoted by Prof R.D. Ranade in his 'Pathway to God in Hindi Literature', chapter V, pt. I, p. 244.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 98, Japji 38
3. Message of Sikhism, p. 60-Guru V. Gauri Rag.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid, p. 63-Guru IV. Gond Rag.

things of the world and completely freed from the spell of the gunas. This is the Real Yoga. In this 'gunatitavastha' the mystic finds him self at home in all places and at all times because God is ever present everywhere and he is one with Him. Dwelling in the midst of worldly folk, the true mystic remains always immersed in the wordless bliss of God's love, which surges in and round him like a mighty sea of nectar; and he is there to impart the light divine and loveful ambrosia to his willing neighbours and associates. As God gives him Love and Light supreme, so does he give the same to the seekers of God.

Meek obedience to the will of God:

Such is the mystic, the greatest of men; free from all attachment, he quietly does, as a sacrifice to Him, the work God wills him to do, turning every thing he touches in to a sacramental grace by his total inward absorption in the Name and Will of God. Without the thought of any thing like personal reward, without passions or over much talk, undisturbed by the whirl of worldly thought around him such a saint is a real Sanyasi. Says Nanak : "he who fixes his mind on God's feet, (who) remains desireless amidst desires and has lovingly made God's Will his own Will is a true Sanyasi".[1] It is well said by Krishna in Srimad Bhagwat Puran :

"निमज्जयोन्मज्जतां घोरे भवाब्धौ परमायनम् ।
सन्तो ब्रह्मविद: शान्त नौर्दृढेवाप्सुमज्जताम् ॥"[2]

A saint, who has realised God and is filled with Peace, is the Supreme Rest and support of all those who are sunk deep in the sea of sensualities and want to be saved by God. As a matter of fact, as Nanak has rightly pointed out, mounted on the highest peak of Advaitic devotion, that God is the sea as well as the ship; this shore as well as the other shore; the mid ocean as well as the tidal waves which overwhelm and embrace the creatures into death-dealing immersion into the waters of worldliness; the Way as well as the way-woldness; the saviour as well the slayer[3] And it is only through the Supreme lovers of God, the realised saints that the seekers are saved from being drowned and conducted safely to the supreme shore. The mystic is the medium through which God protects His devotees and the men who can please a mystic are regarded to have pleased God Himself. For, to serve a mystic is to

1. Nanak Vani, p. 597, Rag Maru M.1. Ashtapadi 7/7.
2. Bhagwat Puran 11/26/32.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 135, Rag Sri M. 1. Gharu 1. Ashtapadia 3.3.

serve God. Has not Lord Krishna himself said: "I am the Atman of the Saint".[1]

So, as is, God perfect, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent so is the saint who is always one with Him. As is God both immanent (in this creation of triune qualities) and transcendent (uncontaminated by these qualities) so are His elected ones, pure and perfect, lotus like uncontaminated though always blossoming in the mire of worldliness. Precisely, a mystic lives under the sheltering canopy of God quite unaffected by the all touching presence of these three qualities. Only the God-drunk devotee remains unaffected for the simple and the sublime reason that not even the shadow of Trigunatmika Maya can enter where the Grace of God reigns supreme.[2] All men are either Maya-drunk or God-drunk: The latter ones are in a creative, divine and thin minority in whose lives both the micro and macro wisdom of worldliness and godliness find fullest play and expression. This is the sport of God and the saints are His playmates.

That is way the mystics are said to live in the final and the highest stage of divine consciousness called the 'turiyavastha' where into the ego, the essence and ambassador of three gunas, not only finds no admittance but is naturally and fully consumed in the smokeless flames of spiritual fire ignited by the heartful meditation on the Divine Name and soulful contemplation on the Divine vision. For, is not a mystic 'Word' personified ? Where the word is realised, perfected and pesonified there the grace of God is in full swing. And, where the grace of God is, the power of Gunas is not. A mystic is the chosen child of God and is thus himself the sea of divine grace. There is no trace whatever of the gunas. He is in the Gracious bosom of God, in the state of 'easy unison'—sahaj-samadhi—which is negatively speaking, the perfect—"guna-less" state (Nirgunavastha) and positively speaking, the perfect 'beyond the gunas' state (Gunatitavastha) both of which are the result of the mystical absorption and inalienable oneness of the Saint with the Absolute Truth, God.[3]

Perfect Obedience to the Will of God

In this superb and soverign state of mystical inalienability

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1. Bhagwat Puran 11/26/34 (सन्त आत्मा अहमेव च).
2. Nanak Vani, p. 545 Rag Ram Kali M1—Siddha Ghosti 60.
3. Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib, p. 10-20 by Duncan Greenless, Rag Ram Kali, 3:6 and Rag Gauri, 27:2.

and oneness of the devotee with the Lord, there is neither the mind, nor the thought nor the desire of the devotee. Such a state is one of spiritual trickles, to begin with, and not one of tidal floods, but the spell of even the trickle is abiding. In that majestic and magnetic spell, the mystic sees the Past and Future rolled and abridged into the eternal NOW. He not only knows the past and future of all, but grows into the mystical realization that he is there to keep the Divine Will of what is, was, and will be to the utmost accuracy. Obedience to the Divine Will (Hukame) is the crowning characteristic of a Master Mystic as is the stark subjections to the Wheel of Law the key note of all the godless beings. The Saints, by the very virtue of their being the never-absenting dearest courtiers of the Kingdom of God, know the Divine Will in advance and share with Him the immanence and omnipotence to execute it with loveful obedience Nanak says :

घटि घटि वैसि निरन्तर रहीए,
चालहि सतिगुर भाए ।
सहजे भ्राए हुकमि सिधाए,
नानक सदा रजाए ।।
भ्रासणि बैसणि थिर नाराइणु,
ऐसी गुरमति पाए ।
गुरमति बूझै भ्राप पछाणै,
सचे साचि समाए ।।[1]

(In Him) who dwells in every heart, We (with our body, mind and soul) live lodged incessantly and act in accordance with the command of the Sadguru (Supreme Teacher). We have come of our own and shall go away (as and) when Ordered. Nanak says 'Sada Rajae', he ever lives in His Will (and acts as per His Will). Narayan alone Is Eternally Steady—'Sthira' such is the lesson of wisdom (we have) received from the Guru. Truly, he who realises his own self by (following the Path taught by) Guru, gets himself absorbed and merged in the Truth i.e., Hari.[2]

By implication, he who follows his own whim has to pay the price of it, and can never be admitted in the transcendental region of spirit.[3] And those who have reached there only took to the strength-giving shelter of the Divine Name imparted by the Sadguru and continued to obey His Will, even after God-realisation, till they breathe their last. That is The Way. The Divine Will is thus known

1. Nanak Vani, p. 539. Sidha Goshti : 3:
2. Nanak Vani. p. 397. Rag Soradhi M.1. Champad.
3. R.D. Rande. Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p. 205.

and God's commands are certainly heard by the mystics of pure water. They have a discourse with the Almighty "Great mystics have", writes the Mystic Philosopher R.D. Ranade, "spoken about three such relationships, दर्शन स्पर्शन and संभाषण. [1]

A Saint is bound to God in manifold ties but these three ties are said to be major: the ties of vision, touch and talk. He is not satisfied by a mere vision of God, he wants to be in God's embrace and to exchange noted with Him. These are the things which seem almost to be beyond the limits of attainable experience."[2] But Nanak had the enviable fortune of being in relationship with God in all these ways. Why mere relationship, he was one with Him, Himself He. The mystics are commissioned by God, in personal and private parleys He holds with them, to fulfil the Mission He designs to execute through each one of them. Nanak was fortunate to have the vision of God and His Commission, rather Holy Command to do His bidding.

Who does not know the story of Nanak's disappearance in the waters of the River and his reappearance from it, after three complete days duly lost in divine lunacy and commissioned by the Lord to repeat His Name and cause others to do so? Those who do know will testify to the act of Nanak's chit-chat (सभाषण) with God. After having seen the vision of God taken in his own hand the cup of Nectar passed on to him by God Himself and heard him say, "I am with you; I have made happy both you and those who take your name. Go and repeat My (Name) and cause others to do so too. I have given you this cup of Nectar as proof of my regard (for you), Nanak rose up and instantaneously fell prostrate before Him and prayingly prattled: "what am I before Thee my God? ...... How can I describe the greatness of Thy Name ?" God was quicker and kinder in His reply: "You have seen My sovereignty, O Nanak ! Go ahead and do as I bid". Out of this ineffable vision and graceful conversation of God gushed forth from Nanak's mouth the great Mystical Rubric of which spiritual import we had a glimpse in the very first discourse of the work. When this Fundamental Formula–Mool Mantra-was divinely uttered by Nanak, God further instructed him thus: "O Nanak, be kind to the one on whom My look of grace may fall, and then I too shall be gracious (to him). My Nām is indeed the Divine First Creator, and you are the divine Guru". And then, Nanak sang out a meditational hymn of praise and prayer.

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1. Prof. R D. Ranade : Pathway to God in the Hindi Literature p. 390.
2. Prof. R.D. Ranade : Pathway to God in the Hindi Literature p. 391.

Only when the Will or Order of the Lord is heard and known that the mystic can, as Nanak did, obey the command. Not otherwise and that, too, only by the Grace of God. When the Divine command is relayed exhorting Nanak to dispense His grace to all with the same generous love as God has shown to him, he finally yielded, bowed down and agreed to do as much as God would enable him to. In this way Nanak resigned himself to God's will and threw himself on His shoulders, at His Mercy. The feeling of gratitude to the Guru and God rose up to the unimaginable peaks and his surrender at the Lord's feet was absolute and automatic. He poured out his heart· then "what pleasures Thee is the best occupation for me".[1] Nanak's God, though Formless and incomprehensible–Niranjan, Nirakar and Ajneya, is yet Merciful and ever Gracious. And the mystic, playing on the high grounds of the Holy Invisible (निरंजन), is atonce incomprehensible and merciful par excellence. He is one with the Fearless and the Formless, entirely dependent on the Grace of God. "I obey Thy Will, and leave every thing to Thee", said the great mystic Kabir.[2] Obedience to the Will of God is, therefore, one of the salient characteristics of a mystic's life. It is self-surrender at its sublimest heights. That opens the Gate Way for Peace to enter and dwell the heart of the mystic. That lifts up the wall of arrogance and lets the Divine Light dawn and illumine the consciousness of the Mystic pure and serene. Obedience is thus the crowning merit of the sublimest spiritual life the master mystic is capable of attaining.

Vision of God in every heart every where & at all times "Abhedawastha"

All those mystics whose highest and greatest gain is God-realisation alone, live in the silencing Presence of the Almighty, in the perennial and peace-increasing quietitude of body, mind and soul, in prolonged and pure supramental state a state wherein wherever the eye goes or glances the glimpse of God only is seen, nothing else. If the eye of the mystic falls, from the mortals' view point, on the stone, tree, male or female, what comes to his gaze in the first instance is God or the divine vision spreading the past, present and future of the thing or person so seen. What he sees within himself with closed eyes, he sees that very 'Vastu' i.e., God everywhere even outside himself with his eyes wide open. He sees himself everywhere enveloping the entire expanse before his gaze. He alone is.

1. Nanak Vani Japji p 88.
2 Harban Singh. Message of Sikhism. p. 95.

That is, he sees only Ram, the Param Purusha, in his immanence and transcedence. The Perfect Illumination spreads all over the three worlds. Nanak says :

ऊरम धूरम ज्योति उजाला । तीन भवण महिगुर गोपाला ॥
ऊगविश्रा असरूप दिखावै । करि किरपा अपुनै घरि आवै ॥[1]

"On waters and land all over, there is the illumination of Light Divine. In all the three worlds the Guru Gopal (alone) is. God manifests Himself in the form of Light in and through (the Grace of) the Guru. He blesses by His grace and enters the home (or the heart of the devotee). Again, says Nanak—

सरबे थान थंनतरी तूं दाता दातारू ।
जहँ देखा तहँ एक तूं अंत न पारावारू ॥

"O Giver of the givers, You alone pervade all the regions. Wherever I gaze I see you. You are endless, and unfathomable." These are highly significant statements and may be regarded as the perfect epitome of the skyhigh spiritual experience of Nanak's mysticism. Nanak's mystical delight and experience of seeing only God everywhere 'जहँ देखा तहँ एक तू' is comparable to the similar experience of the great Gujarati Saint Narsi Mehta who sang out hilariously : यह मन जाय जहाँ जगु जब ही परमातम् दरसावै' i e., wherever and whenever the mind goes to the world only the God is seen", "and nothing else flashes forth to the sight" (दूजा दृष्टि न आवै). The famous Maratha Saint Ekanath was the recepient of this wonderful experience of God being continuously present everytime everywhere- even in sleep, dream and waking moments of life. He says that by the "Collyrium" with which the "Guru graced" his eyes, he sees Ram within and without, awake and asleep, ever, always and everywhere. The pure spiritual import of all this is that he who has seen God and become one with Him in his supramental state, which is a steady and regular feature of his life, is, by the Grace of the Guru Gopal, now in a continuous state of seeing God even in his waking, sleeping and dreaming life. These are three worlds 'तीन भवण' of Nanak. The phrase "सरबै थान थनंतरी" is very significant. Not only "At all the places"—but even "within and behind" 'थनतरी' these places Nanak sees God. ,The invisible manifests Himself and becomes visible not only on the surface of the places beasts, birds, things, and persons but in the heart of heart of all them The transcendence and immanence here loose meaning and get fused

1. Nanak Vani p. 517. Rag Ram Ka. M.I. Dakhani Oankaru 8.

in to the ever presence of the One He. All distinctions disappear. Walls that divide and distances the separate are no more. The Pure consciousness (चिन्मयावस्था) in the mystic's body attains to its divine effulgence of Light sublime and, then, there The Indivisible Oneness of the Supreme has Its spiritual sport all over. The 'Jiva' has become 'Shiva', the Atman has accomplished Its union (संयोग) with the Parmatman. The 'bheda'—the distinction born of the 'Cloud of Ignorance' that divides and separates—is lifted up and removed for ever and the "abedavastha"—the indivisible oneness is established with the seal oh Eternity by the Grace of the Guru.

The life of Oneness is the life of Perfection

It is in this state of 'Abhedavastha' that the Upanishadic seers sang out the famous mystical maxim : "ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवाव शिष्यते" Nanak's mysticism is a glaring testimony to this highest spiritual experience of the Perfect One which is both 'That' (अदः) and 'this' (इदम्) rolled into one as the unmanifest 'Niranjan' and manifest 'Samsar'. Only when the state of God-realisation is complete, the mystic rises into this Divine consciousness of the Perfect oneness of the invisible consciousness and the cosmic creation, of the Creator and His Creation. This is the highest existential import of the Reality, the Truth.

Thus says the upanishadic sage: That (the unmanifest cause) is Perfect. This (the manifest Reality i.e , the caused creation) is Perfect. Having had the realisation of (That) Perfect, only, the Perfect remains. "This superb mathematics of mysticism is of the highest excellence: infinity minus infinity is infinity. Are then there two infinities, two Perfect Ones? No. Those who have realised That One speak of only One, without a second. In this context the mystical meaning of 'ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या' becomes clear. The Brahma Is. This is the Truth. The 'jagat' i.e. Creation is. This understanding is ignorance (मिथ्या). That 'God is' is the true understanding and this understanding grows out of the realisation of the Brahman. Of this Brahman it is the one without a second"-ekamevadvitiyam —but also that all this that we see is surely Brahman, "Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman'.' Nanak's mysticism is thus in the pure line of the Advaitic traditions of the Aryan sages. God is perfect and, therefore His, creation, too, is Perfect. "God is true, and so also is His Creation,"[1] Says Nanak :

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1. Message of Sikhism. p. 43. Guru V Rag Gauri.

एको एकु कहै सभु कोई उमै गरबु विस्रापै ।
अंतरि बाहरि एकु पछाणै इउ घरु महलु सिस्रापै ॥1॥

Everyone talks of the One (God) but there dwells Pride in their hearts. (That is, they donot live Oneness). He who realises Oneness within and without can thus know this (Creation) as the Abode of God. Nanak proclaims again and again : "बिन साचा जग काचा " i.e., without realising the Truth, the creation (जग) appears imperfect (काचा) Only when God realisation is made, it comes to his light that the Creation is as Perfect as its creator is. Only from the Perfect comes out the Perfect. The distinction is as unreal as is its assertion in want to true realisation. This is the kingpin and the crowning achievement of Nanak's mysticism.

The mystic As A Hari Mandir

Such a one, who is one with the One, is 'हरि मदरु the Temple of God. Nanak says that that, should be regarded as the temple of God where God is seen or realised हरि मदरु सोई आखीऐ जिथहु हरि जाता'.[2] And, he says in the same breath that one should not seek Him, the Root, outside one's ownself (बाहरि मूल न खोजिये) [3] for God is right there in the heart (घर माहि बिधाता)[4]. He calls the body, the 'human fort' (काइआ कोटु) ,[5] as God's Palace and exhorts man to realize Him in his own heart by the Grace of the Guru so that he may soon be enabled to realise the same Hari living in each living being and as pervading the entire Creation in the same fashion.[6] Only he who has realised God thus should be regarded as the temple of God. He is a moving human home of the Almighty because it is there that He is realised. So a mystic is undoubtedly a divine human temple, worthy to be visited by the aspiring seekers of spiritual life. This mystery is revealed only to the Guru-blessed devotees and to nobody else [7] The spiritual literature of the saints everywhere is a living corroboration of this mystical characteristic of a Saint. Saint Jnaneshwar also speaks of the human body as the Temple of the Lord when he sings out "देहु तो पंढरी पंढरीनाथाची". Surely, indeed, the life of the mystic is as clean, pure and pleasingly attractive as are the inside cleanliness and perfumed environs of

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1. Nanak Vani p. 517. Dhakhani Onkaru. Ram Kali M.1.
2. Nanak Vani p. 566. Ram Kali Ki Var M.1.
3. Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5. Ibid. Page No. 563.
6. Ibid. Page No. 567.
7. Nanak Vani, p. 567.

the cleanest of all the temples in the World. As do the cleanliness and perfume, light and sonorous sound of the ringing bells and the imbellished Icons fill the inside of the temple, so do the light and sound divine, the perfume of Guru's grace and the personal presence of the Impersonal Hari fill the heart of his Elected one, the Mystic. A Mystic is veritably the living church of the Almighty.

A Mystic as the Tirtha, the Holy pilgrimage

From each and every pore of such a mystic's body sings out, says Nanak, the meditational Name of God (गुरमुखि रोम रोम हरि धिआवै). Only such a mystic attains to the highest holiness of the supreme oneness (पवित्र परम पद पावै) with God, True indeed, that to him, who is so absorbed and lost in God, God alone comes as absorbed and visible everywhere all time. Nay, there is in him no sense of place and time. Only he is seen manifesting Himself in all forms and names. Is not such a mystic dead drunk in the wine divine at the level of pure and supreme consciousness? Is not such a mystic God-possessed to such an extremity that he is himself the foot-stool of God, and the Guru's Grace in human person? A mystic of such a peerless excellence is what we have called the 'word personified', the Nama incarnate. And, the Nam is, says Guru Nanak, the real tirtha [1] "My friend", says the Fourth Guru, "to associate with the Guru is the sacred bath". "Shall we then go to bathe at the pilgrim place", asks Guru Nanak and replies in the same breath, "No, Nam is the only sacred place of pilgrimage."[2] "Song of God's praise is my Ganges and Kashi, wherein my spirit bathes and bathes. True bath shall it be, if one have love of God, night and day," says Nanak again and again.[3] A mystic, as Guru, is the holy centre of man's pilgrimage.

If this pilgrimage of visiting the mystics and the Guru is not made, if the sacred bath by way of heartful meditation of the Divine Name and soulful contemplation of the vision of God is not undertaken, then even the thousand time going to Kashi or Kaba, will be of no avail, on the spiritual path of self-realization. Says Kabir : "I was going on a pilgrimage to Kaaba, when the Lord met on the way. The master began to rebuke me: who has commanded you to do such acts?" Surely, indeed, one should visit only the Guru's place, meet him, serve him and meditate on the

1. Message of Sikhism, p. 111. Rag Dhanasri M.1.
2. Ibid., p. 112.
3. Ibid., p. 111. Rag Asa M.1.

Name graciously passed on to him by the Guru. Says the great Saint Tuka Ram: Only that place is holy and beautiful where God's glory is sung; only that person is a holy centre of pilgrimage who has realised God. There is no higher 'Tirtha' than the mystic, the Guru and Naam, for there the Lord is seen by Grace. Nanak says in unmistakable words: 'आदि पुरख गुर दरसन देखहि' [1] by having the (darsan)vision of the Guru one gets the darsan of God, the Adi Purukha. He adds that 'जाकी जगति हेतु मुखि नाम । संत भगत की संगत रामु'[2] । i e., for whose worship the Name is, repeated by or in the mouth That, 'Ram' is (to be got) in the association of the Saints or the mystics. The Master Mystics, who are the rarest in the world, are the true 'Tir tha'. Even the respectful and loving repetition of the Mystic's Name is enough to carry the man into the Kingdom of God. That is why the people of faith gladly and gratefully proclaim that (Nanak Nam Jahaj) the very Name of Nanak is the ship with which help the faithful can easily cross the ocean of existence (Bhavsagar). A saint is a shrine par excellence.

Mystic's 'AARATI'

Of such mystics God is the religion and God is the worship God is worshipped and God is the worshipper. When only He is, who worships whom? When He is in every thing and in every article in every place and every person. Who is to offer what article in such a worship? Nanak's reply, which gives us a glimpse of the Niranjan mysticism which he lived in the fullness of spiritual life, partakes of Sri Shankaracharya's mystic song on the 'Supreme Worship' (para puja). It represents Nanak's utter impossibility to worship the illimitable and the unperceiveable (by human intellect or eyes) by the finite means of the mortals as well as Nanak's heightened divine consciousness to uphold the dictum that what pleases Him is His Aarti (the worship). He once sang out to the pandits of Sri Jagannath Puri temple[3] the macro-view of God's supreme worship thus:

> The Sky is the salver, the Sun and the
> moon are the lamps;
> The spheres of stars studded in it
> as Jewels;
> The chandan-scented winds from the Malai
> mountains wave
> And scatter across the fragrance of

1. Nanak Vani, p. 290. Rag Asa M.1. Chaur. Astapadia 9.5.
2. Ibid., 9.7.
3. Nanak Vani, p. 416. Rag Dhansari M.1. Aarti—Dr. Jai Ram Misra.

myriads of flowers.
Thus is thy worship performed,
O Thou, the Destroyer of fear,
The unstruck melody rings,
And maketh music of the Word as if on the
tender lips of a Flute (1-Pause).
Thousands are Thy eyes, yet hast Thou eyes?
Thousands are Thy forms, yet hast Thou a form?
Thousands are Thy lotus feet, yet hast Thou feet?
Thousands are Thy Noses to smell, yet hast Thou nose,
O wonder of Wonders? (2)
Thou art the spirit that pervadeth all;
'Tis' Thy Light, that Lights all hearts.
Through the Guru's wisdom doth Thy Light burnish,
And that what pleaseth Thee becometh Thy worship. (3)
Like the black bee, I crave day and night for the
honey of Thy Lotus feet.
Grant Nanak, the Chatrik, the Nectar of Thy
Mercy, O Lord,
That be Mergeth in Thy Name (4-1-7-9)[1]

In this 'Aarati' sung out by Nanak, three things are quite obvious and of supreme importance. Firstly, there is the bafflement of Nanak who says that it is utterly impossible to do 'aarati' of That Great One in whose devotional worship the entire creation is creating a wonderfully melodious symphony on the orchestra of the colourful panorama of the wide wide Nature. It is worshipping Him with the Sun and the Moon as lamps placed in the plate of Sky, is offering the entire blossom of spring flowers and fruits tossing in the bosom of the Earth as presents at His feet. Nanak sings aloud: "कैसी आरती होई भवखण्डना, तेरी आरती"?[2] How can we do your 'aarati', O Bhavkhandana ? Can any mortal with all the means at his command mean which drawn as they are from the lap of Nature itself, are dwarfed to nothingness in their comparison with the resourcefulness of His creation- make the 'aarti' of the Great One ? No; then why boast of doing the aarti of God at all ? Nanak urged the pandits of Jagannathpuri to realise that the real 'aarati' is not what they are usually doing in common rut of worship, it is much different, deeply devotional and independent of any means outside the Atman, self-realisation and service above self in utter humility and absolute dependence on the Supreme alone constitute the real

1. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol III, p. 638. Rag Dhansari M.1. Aarti.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 416. Rag Dhansari M.1. Aarti.

'aarati'. That is the reason why Nanak submits with a sublime feeling of utter surrender: 'जो तिसु भावै सु आरती होई' i.e., that which please Thee is thy worship.[1] That is exactly what Sri Ram Krishna Paramhansa once, when asked by somebody said; "That, whereby the Lord is pleased, is devotion". Nanak has, in the second place, described God in the traditional manner of the Saints and scriptures. God has thousands of eyes, hands, feet and forms, but He has not even one single eye, one single hand, foot or form. He is, and yet is not. How wonderful His form! Nanak is enamoured of His unique Beauty and is possessed by It. He further points out that each and everything shines only by the brilliance and grace of the Lord, the Light of all lights. Only with the aid and advice of the Gracious Guru can this reality be brought to man's gaze and understanding. Lastly, Nanak makes a fervent appeal and soulful prayer to the Jyoti-swaroop God in the form of Light to bless him with the water of His Grace so that his mind should ever dwell in His divine Name and slake the thirst of his bee like heart with the ambrosial honey he may thus draw from the Lotus feet of God. What a wonderful prayer ! This is self-surrender of Nanak at its holiest heights. This is the real 'aarati' of Nanak, the great mystic.

All the mystics of the Advaitic devotion and of the Niranjan cult have spoken of this sort of divine worship. Let us make one single allusion to the (Para Puja) of Sri Shankaracharya who also sang out long before Nanak; 'कथपूजा विधीयते ?'

'—How can His prayer or worship be made? For, as he said:

अखण्डे सच्चिदानन्दे निर्विकल्पैकरूपिणि ।
स्थितेऽद्वितीय भावेऽस्मिन्कथ पूजाविधीयते-
निरञ्जनस्य किं धूपं दीपैर्वा सर्वसाक्षिणः ।
निजानन्दैक तृप्तस्य नैवेद्यकिं भवेदिह ।।
प्रदक्षिणा ह्यनन्तस्य ह्यद्वयस्य कुतो नतिः ।
वेदवाक्यैरवेद्यस्य कुतः स्तोत्रं विधीयते ।

i e., How can the Indivisible One, Truth-Consciousness-Bliss, and the Inconceivable be worshipped in the highest supramental state of the life of unity? What has the inconceivable and the incomprehensible to do with the incense ? What is the good of showing the lamp to the All witnessing One? Of what avail it is to offer flower, fruits, milk, honey etc., to Him who is immersed deep in the divine self satisfaction of the Nectar (Name) ? How can there be the circum ambulation i.e., 'Parikrama' of the Endless? In what way to make saluta-

1. Nanak Vani, p. 416. Rag Dhanasri M.1. Aarti.

tions to the Non-dual He? And, how can His prayer be sung who is unknowable even by the scriptural hymn-singing ? As a matter of fact, it is impossible to do the aarati of That One who is the self Illumined and the Luminous He, of That One who is the Perfect and the allembracing Reality Those who are the mystics of the highest type make only Nanakism prayer after the fashion of Sri Shanker, who said: एवमेव परापूजा सर्वविस्थासु सर्वदा । एक बुद्धया तु देवेशे विधेया ब्रह्मवित्तमैः । All the God-realised souls should, in all states, do with one-pointed intellect i.e , pure devotion only such a sort of 'para-puja' of the Lord. For, didnot Nanak also speak of the same prayerful aarati in the following words :

> हरि चरण कमल मकरन्द लोभित मनो अनदिनो मोहि पिआसा
> कृपा जल देहि नानक सांरिग कउ होई जाते तेरे नाभि वासा ॥

The crowning import of all this is that, since realising God is becoming God, the formal and mechanical way of worshipping and showing lamps before the icon of God is of no avail till the aspiring soul reaches the level of that self-realisation wherefrom the 'para-puja' becomes an interminable process of meditation and contemplation. Futile, indeed, is the mere waving of lights before the omnipresent Being, if all such waving etc., doesnot finally culminate into the divine oneness with the Lord, which alone is the Real Worship. The symbolic worship of God by lighting of the worldly lamps burning fruits, various kinds of incense, by offering fruits, flowers etc., must be turned into the mystic's way of real worship or 'aarati' of the Light of Light within. It is the complete absorption of the aspirants heart and soul in to the Name of the Lord, a state in which the individual soul cries in sweet and blissful agony (आर्त्तनाद) for fuller and yet deeper absorption by the Guru's Grace, which constitutes Nanak's or any master mystics 'aarati' of the Niranjan 'Ek Onker'.

Effect of Mystical Characterstics on the Saint's Life

mystics are the finest flower of spiritual fullness in the gay garden of God. Even a look at the face of such a master Mystic, apart from being the blessed and blissful fortune of the onlooker, would immediately make him aware of the pink golden glow peeping out of the skin of the mystic's face; of the inviting and kindly half-closed and fleeting looks of the mystic in whose heart wells up a sea of compassion; of the serene and effortless ease and the blissful child-like movements and agile expressions; of the saintly grace and simplicities which are impressively peace-spreading and love- be-

getting. A mystic, like a massive magnet, is ever attractive. Any man in his company is bound to experience joy of the heart and peace of the soul It is a peculiar effect, which every goer to the mystic's abode experiences in his own unique way. To describe it is to destory much of its delicacy, delight and beauty.

Beyond Death or Deathlessness

Even when a saint is more than a human skeleton to look at a handful of bones, veins and muscles-God glows out of his bony structure to the great gratification of the seers. The presence of the saint is felt, it is always telling for, 'the boneless soul which made a bony tenement'[1] has now come to its own in this very life of the mystic. Naturally, as its consequence, the mystic has now crossed the River of Death and lodged himself permanently in the love and steadfast devotion of God. He has cut the providential knot of wombs and become free from 'coming and going' into world[2]. As the Saint Gulal says: 'अब नहि आवन जावन हो' Now, the round of births and deaths is at last liquidated by the power of meditation, by mystic's utter dependence on prayer and Grace of God.

Fearlessness

A mystic is not afraid of Death [3] Nay, he is ever prepared to give up his mortal coil any time without even an iota of fear. He is fearless simply on the strength of his absolute reliance on the Name, on that of the plain realisation that the soul is deathless and imperishable. Nanak says: "There is no fear for them who have fallen at His feet".[4] True, indeed, by worshipping God, all fears are destroyed. There is no room for fear in the saint's heart, for it is alreaey filled with the love of God. Lovers of God are as fearless as are the greedy of Gold merciless. The major point to be borne in mind in this regard is that fearlessnees of the mystic is the qualitative effect of his God-realisation of his constant and 'persistent contact'[5] with the Atman. Fear is an accompaniment of body consciousness. A mystic, by virtue of his being lost in the all absorbing Name of God, loses all bodily-consciousness and is that fearless on that strength: yes, absolutely free from all fear. That is the secret of mystic's fearlessness.

It may however be argued that since all those who are fearless are not mystics, this quality of fearlessness is not peculiar to

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1. A Rig Vedic passage quoted by Prof. R.D. Ranade in his "Path way to God in Kannad Literature," p. 146.
2. Nanak Vani, p. 465. Var Suhi M.1. Paudi.
3 Ibid., p. 494. Rag Ram Kali M.1. Chaupada.
4. Messags of Sikhism, p. 171. Rag Sorath M.5.-by Harban Singh.
5. Prof. V H. Date: Yoga of the Saint, p. 182

saints alone. Even martyrs or heroes on the state scaffold or on war fronts are fearless of the first order, but by no stretch of imagination can they be hailed and placed on the category of Saints. The quality of being fearless is certainly common to mystics and martyrs alike, but the motives in both the cases are different and poles apart. Fearlessness regarding death in the case of mystics is nothing but the natural offshoot and the negative aspect of mystic's divine drunkenness and love lorn-ness of God continuously streaming forth on the vision of the mystic, his heart is dancing with Joy too. 'Fearlessness' is the otherside and the natural offshoot the ever joyfulness of the mystic's heart, says Kabir. It is neither a means nor an end but an accident to meet death for which the mystic lives ever prepared, writes Dr. Date[1] But in the case of the martyrs of history, fearlessness in facing death is a means to prove the martyrdom or justify the stand or cause. A mystic dies in obedience to the Will of God whereas a martyr dies in upholding the cause which he wants to propagate by his martyrdom. There is sublime self-surrender in the first; there is highly rationalised ego in the latter. There is the play of the gentlest spiritual indifference to ward the event of death which may visit the mystic any time. There is in the martyr's case, intellectual aggressiveness to sacrifice life at the altar of a cause. Precisely speaking, the fearlessness of the mystic is born of his supramental communion with the Word and is a positive, dynamic spiritual readiness to give up the ghost anytime. The fearlessness of a martyr, on the other hand, is a mentally ripened quality of being prepared to face death in order to propagete the justification of the cause of death, and, as such, it is a positive step to serve a material end in view. It is a means.

Desirelessness

The spiritual corollary of the fearlessness of the Saints is the state of desirelessness. A Saint has silenced all his desires by his devotional meditation and deep contemplation. A mystic's sole desire is a life of loveful union with God. That is all. God is the source of Saint's life, light and love. And when God is filling the devotee's heart what other desire can ever attract him? Desires or passions stage a spiritual farewell to the mystics of divine life and suffer a funeral in their case. Automatically, therefore, those who are lost in the love of God and life divine, are freed from the thraldom of Desire. A true mystic is rightly hailed as प्राप्त काम as one whose desires are fulfilled and is absolutely desireless now. When God, the Sovereign spiritual Treasure, is in His own House, why

1. Dr. V.H. Date. Yoga of the Saints p. 183.

should anyone go a begging? So desire is to beg for its fulfilment in one way or the other. A mystic is not a mendicant.

It does not, however mean that the mystic needs nothing to keep two poles of his stomach apart. He does need food to eat, place to live, clothes to wear. What is meant and implied by his desirelessness is That he maintains a spiritual indifference to them; he is neither joyous nor miserable to get or miss them. This state of desirelessness is the natural fruit of the long and deep practice of meditation and contemplation. It is neither willed, nor inspired nor imposed. This quality is a natural growth and is of spiritual essence and perfection.

Activism

Freedom from fear and want, which constitutes the one-half of the Four Freedoms in the famous Churchillian vocabulary, is a great human ideal realisable only in the practical form of pure mysticism practised and preached by the high and the holy Saints. Only on human level these two freedoms, which make man fearless and desireless, can never be achieved in their fullness Only a Master Mystic, in his super state of Jeevanmukti, can be the true embodinent of fearlessness and desirelessness. It does not, however, mean as is often argued by certain rationalists, that the very desirelessness of the mystics is enough to account for their actionlessness which seems, to the arguers, the most obvious trait of the mystics. It is a big blunder to regard mystics as the slaves of inaction or inertia. Actionlessness is a quality peculiar only to the highly indolent and lazy beings; it can never even touch the life of a mystic And, if we go by strict spiritual analysis or even by the simple rationale of logic, it would become evident that nothing in this big creation is actionless. That is what the scientists proclaim and the scriptures have ever been affirming. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagvadgita that not far a moment is He without action;[1] and verily, as such, since no being or non-being is, in whom He is not, actionlessness is impossible. Many millions may not know that countless atoms are invisibly dancing in the cosmic atmosphere, but the active and rhythmic dance of atoms is not non-existence even for the split of a second. The entire universe. every pratical of it, is in the incessant flux of intense activity. The levels and degrees of activity do of course differ, in case of human life, from person to person and from plane to plane. Surely the kind and quality of activity is widely different in case of persons working purely on physical, mental or spiritual

1. Bhagvad Gita Chapt. III Slokas 5.

planes. On the first two planes the activity, though fundamentally different, and the fruits thereof are both visible and useful and therefore intelligible. In one case the strength and beauty of physical activity is as obviously seen as in the other case the might and beauty of the activity on the mental plane is. The difficulty deepens in the case of work done on the plane of Spirit. The work is as sublime and mystical as it is silent and invisible. All those who work in the realm of spirit have got to go inward, to meditate on the Name and contemplate on the vision of God. The world inside the mystic's heart is incessantly active. There is a rumbling volcano of activity in the inmost chambers of the mystics heart; but on the pure plane of spirit as this ceaseless divine toil is going on, it is both imperceptible and futile i. e. as good as inaction, from the utilitarian point of view. And, hence the criticism that actionlessness is a characteristic feature of mystics and that mystical life is an escape from the struggle of life and its severities. This notion is naive, untrue and untenable. For, from purely spiritual rather supra-rational viewpoint the mystic is actionless in midst of incessantly intense activity and immeasurably active in midst of unbinding y bottomless inaction.[1] True, indeed, the Mystic does not act,; only God does. For, He is the Doer. Since the mystic is the top sportsman of spiritual activity (meditation and contemplation) on the high ground of infinity, he is a highly charged divine dynamo of spiritual energy and activity beyond measure. The life of the highest activity is that which is freed from all binding actions but united with the All-Knowing, All-doing, Ever Present He, who liberates from the spell of Ignorance (Maya) and from the rounds of Existence. To live in loveful unison with the Lord is liberation; and a mystic alone lives the unitive life of love. This is the secret of mystic's fearlessness and desirelessness which accounts for his incessant activism in midst of his seeming actionlessness. A mystic is thus a live power-house of spirit, run by ever-increasing fire of Love, which lits up the fused bulbs of the aspiring souls and serves them by opening the gates of Light within and thereby dispelling the forces of darkness and division that surround life and keeping them in tune with the life of eternal unity in midst of infinite diversity. A mystic is as superbly active as God is and serves as a great spiritual generator and radiating centre of the godly Grace and Goodness. Can he, in whom the Sun Absolutely Reality stoplessly burns, be inactive or actionless? Is Sun ever inactive? To nod in the affirmative is only to sacrifice the truth at the altar of ignorance.

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1. Bhagvad Gita.

Sinlessness and selflessness

The mystical silence, born of deeply inward and highly active life of intense meditation and pure contemplation need not thus be mistaken for the mystic's life of inaction. In the midst of the sea of tumult and turmoil, to which the men of flesh are heir, the mystic retains the majesty of serene calm and quietitude of mind and soul. In midst of the gerrullous and stormy sea of passions and pervert sensuality the mystic keeps ever Kindling the Light of Love Divine sublime and steady. In the midst of galling death all around, the mystic sits unperturbed and sips in mortality from the cup of Nectar-Name. For a mystic, then, there is no fear, no desire, no death, no inaction. He is fearless, desireless, deathless and all active. For him there is no day, no night; no limit, no dimension; no time, no space. He is, by virtue of his being in the hug close embrace of God, beyond Time and space. All meet and merge in him and he meets and merges in all. No actions bind him, no fetters fasten him, no sins touch him. He is free. He is Jeevanmukta. One and in perfect unison with the Divine Grace as he is,he is dynamically active as per Divine Will in being the medium of God's Grace to descend upon the aspiring souls as also in being the mint where Divine Name is coined and bestowed upon the souls intent on God-realisation. He is the liberated one and, by way of actively participation in the fulfilment of the Divine Will, he is the liberator also. All those seekers of the Truth who come under the divine unbrella of such a liberated one, the liberator, and conduct their thought and life processes as per his biddings are bound to realise the unfastening of the knots of ignorance in the deeper and radical parts of their being, especially the knot of the ego in the heart, हृदय ग्रन्थि all ultimately culminating into the realisation of God, identity with Him and the final union, संयोग; with the Lord. A stage is reached by each of them where from the supreme experience of the Liberator can be their experience too. They too get liberated and become the liberator: all desires are consumed, all expectations get annihilated; only the light divine-the soul-remains. It is at this stage that the realisation deepens all the more that the ultimate merging of the soul with the Lord is not worked out by the ego-bound mentality of man-the fruit of all the human labours in the line comes from outside the personal range. It is always the Guru's guidance of God's grace that ensures success, the Samyoga, the realisation of atman as Parmatman and final union of the (seeming) two in One. The Grace, the guiding Light, may accompany the endeavours of the aspirant sadhak-from the very beginning quite openly in some

cases, but covertly in many instances until the hour of consummation arrives, when the Jeevanmukta sees that it is the hand of Guide, the Grace of God, that was all along preparing the soul for reaching the goal. Ego (sin) is dead. Desire is no more. Only the soul shines in God's splendour.[1] At this highest stage he might say with the upanishadic seers: "There is no bondage, no birth; none is bound, none freed; no sadhak; there is none to desire liberation, none is liberated; this is the highest Truth."

This mystical selflessness is the most luscious and ripened fruit of the mystical union par excellence. A Mystic is now one with the All-controlling, free, eternal consciousness; he is an open secret, an effulgent centre for the mainfestation of the Supreme Reality, God or the self, the Truth.

It is not without significance to point out here that while the experience of unity and realisation of Brahman or God, the omnipresent One, may be common to all Jeevanmuktas, for there is the universality of the mystical experience-their behaviour in life, their thoughts and language and the formulations of method, and if they happen to be thinkers, their constructions of philosophical systems, vary very largely and quite often. But whatever may be the presentation of their ideals, they are fundamentally based on realisation of no mean order, and at their best they are the highest possible for man while he still lives on earth.

2. The Moral Characterstics of A Saint:

Such souls, by virtue of their unitive life of Light and Love in Godhead as also by virtue of thus having transcended all limiting notions of territory, space and time, serve as beacon-lights and power-houses, as it were, for the moral and spiritual reformation and progress, not only of the individual but of humanity at large. Their very existence in our midst is a blessing. Says Sri Shankaracharya: "There live great and high souled persons who having controlled their mind (walk the earth), doing good to others as doest the spring season. Having themselves crossed the ocean of existence (becoming i.e. samsara), they help others as well (out of spontaneous love), with no motive whatever, to cross the same." Nanak, like the ancient Shankaracharya, was the most illustrious walking Minstrel of God who practised perfect peace of the soul and preached it to mankind tormented by hatreds, tensions and violence born of narrow and warring sectarianism, communalism and racialism-the most poisonous fruits of Ego (Haume) and Duality (Dubidha)-from which humanity at large and the Indians in particular severely

1. Nanak Vani, p. 541. Rag Ram Kali M. 1. Sidh Goshti 21, last two lines.

suffered at that time. Nanak's appearance as the Sun of Absolute Reality on the socio-ethical and psycho-spiritual horizone of the Hindu and Muslim life of the 16th century India was of high import and value in the regeneration of Man, in re-structuring the values of communal life, and in the reforming of attitudes of Hindus towards the Muslims, of Muslims towards the Hindus, of every common-man toward the pathways of God-realisation. He came to dispel the forces of darkness and division which tore as under the socio-economic and politico-religious life of India as a nation. At a time which saw the sway of the crescent impinged and fast spreading all over India, on the one hand, and the mounting muslim tyranny and fanatical attrocities assuming hideous forms on the other. Nanak, with immeasurable courage, drew the attention of the erring multitudes towards the real core of religion and taught them the meaning of truly spiritual life and the urgent need of being human. Only truly religious fellow, he said, has the title to be called a Muslim or a Hindu; a Yogi or a Sadhu. Only a truly religious attitude, which would enable the mutually warring and hating communities to come together in the loving bond of amity and fellowship, could relieve people from tension and tyranny and help them to live in a happy, harmonious way. He pointedly invited the people's attention towards the one-ness of God and wanted them to understand that it was the same God of whom the Muslims and the Hindus were the diverse devotees. It was that one who was the heart-beat of all the living beings and the heart of the inert mass all over Call Him by whatever name, He is the One Supreme, Indivisible Truth, worthy of our adoration and worship by us all alike, whether we are Muslim, Hindus or other ones. Nanak's doctrine of the Father-hood of God and Brotherhood of mankind which is the derivative culmination of this very spiritual experience of the One Reality is the highest moral and utmost human counterpart of Nanak's mysticism.

The first and foremost moral characteristic of Nanak, as a mystic, therefore, is that he preached the moral gospel of the oneness of mankind only after having himself first experienced the divine one ness of the spiritual Realm of Truth i e. the Kingdom of God. His mystical one-ness with the Param Purushottam lay at the root of both his sublimest moral life and his most humane teaching of world-fellowship. He sermonized what was already an inalienable part of his dynamic spiritual life. His morality was nothing but one of the blossoms in the spiritual spring of his life's mystical Eden.

Let us have for fuller and richer accuracy, a comprehensive, not analytical, survey of the moral characteristics of a mystic or of

Nanak as a mystic. Only in the background of the perspective hinted above. For, any analytical enquiry or approach picks up a subject, surveys and scrutinizes it in into several aspects, takes it piecemeal, patches up into a whole conceptually what is apparently a single and definite whole. The illustration of a tree would render the point clear The tree is there in the lap of Nature; as a whole it makes its appearance; it is born whole grows whole, reaches its fullness whole with root and branch, fruit and foliage. We can look at in several aspects and deal with them as we may-stem and bark and marrow, fruit and flower, seed and root. Analytically. the tree is all these many in one In reality, the tree is the same in all its parts which seem distinct from one another, yet not different from the tree which is essentially one. This analogy should prove helpful for a correct understanding of the statement of the mysties all over the world that Existence is One, Ekam Sat as also of this observation that a mystic of anytime and any place is, in his dealings with the people in the world, mystical human or moral par excellence. To derive his moral characteristics as some distinct and separate qualities of his behaviour as a Mystic is as absurd an act as to Mystic is as absurd an act as to think of the one tree in the many parts as numerically one. It is possible to see a mystic act sometimes in a prepondering mood of compassion, sometimes with a grit resolve to suffer odds in patience, sometimes in an inspiring and illumined mood to forgive the unforgivable: at times in a divine state of utter equanimity, at still other time in grand and golden way of renunciation, at yet other moment with a sublime persistence to serve the poor the needy and the tormented ones sometimes with chastening humility, sometimes in baffling chastisements or expressions of anger, tearful anguish and pity; sometimes in a dancing mood of joy, laughter or ecstasy; sometimes in more such or other ways. All the modes of mystic's behaviour with persons who come to him or to whom he may visit are nothing but the expressions of one who has resigned himself to the Will of God and who has no personal motive to serve. A mystic's life is the highest Morality in practice.

Selfless Universalism or Advaitic Morality:

A true mystic belongs to God and God alone, to none else. There is God everywhere, but he alone sees Him who belongs to Him. The mystic sees Him in all names and forms, in all places, in all persons, in all things. The entire universe lives by His presence and He lives in its every pore. The worldly fellows see Him not and deny Him though He is. Denying Him is merely kidding. As the

kids look at the watch and only play with it, without knowing it as the indicator of Time, so the earthly human creatures look at the world, live and die in it, without knowing it as the index of the Timeless killer and keeper of Time, God, the Almighty One, Ik Omkar. The mystic knows this truth and, therefore, lives in his own body as a divine Guest and in the world as a humble seeker of the Supreme, and as such he is ever in the selfless service of humankind, irrespective of caste, colour, Creed sex or nationality. For, the 'Ik Omkar' whom he worships is casteless, colourless, creedless, sexless and without any nationality. For, He is the fountain source of all, giving them dazzling power and deceptive lease of life; and He is at the same time the giver of Light and the divine eye to discover Him in all these variations of human structuring of socio-political and religious life. For, was not God there before Christ, Krishna or Mohammad? Was He not when all these and such sons or incarnations or prophets of God were alive? Is He not when every one of them in the physical form is missing from our midst to-day? Will He not be when all is not ? The mystic, who knows that He will ever be as He ever was and is, can not be overpowered and led away by the temptations of the worldly life-neither by the tempting gold. nor beauty nor by the sense of power, pelf and fame. The worship of God within is the sovereign treasure of the mystic's life. God is the mystic's power, beauty and gold, and with this power so graciously shared by God with him, he lives in the world selflessly serving one and all alike, without being contaminated by the things of the world. On the other hand, whatever things or beings that come in such a mystic's contact get the vibrating touch of Truth which is all purifying. Since the mystic sees God everywhere and in every being he is ever up and active in the service of all beings all over. None that seeks him goes un-served and the greatest service he renders to mankind is to show them the pathway to the realisation of the Supreme Truth-'Satyasya Satyam'-the one Eternal God. Thus the selfless universalism is the crowning jewel of a mystic's morality.

Angerlessness

As selflessness is the ripened fruit of self-realisation which perfects man into a mystic, so is angerlessness the second cardinal ingridient of mystic's life and character. The mystical flame, which is kindled and kept incessantly burning by mystic's easy meditational absorption into the contemplation of divine vision, burns up anger root and branch and, in the purified and illumined inmost chambers of the heart thereby, peace reigns supreme. The roots of anger are in desire and the mystic, by the very vision and Grace of God,

is desireless, a divinely satiated soul. He is ever absorbed in drinking the Nectar Name and of that meditational and contemplational activity he is never tired, he is ever hungry only of this ambrosial diet of the soul and, as such, he is ever outside the power or province of Anger. Says Nanak: "When His Nam resides in the mind, Anger and conceit are washed away".[1] Yes, anger can not even enter him, touch him or threaten him. Neither can Anger surge up in his heart, nor can anybody's expressions of anger intimidate or cow him down. For, a mystic is the death of desire and fear both in spirit and from. Like Plato's ideal man, the eye and heart of the mystic lie fixed up not on the objects of the senses, but on the Rest and Root of all, Ik Omkar.

Such a mystic who has no desire of worldly things, has neither any expectation nor any anxiety; and hence no anger. Men become angry either when they lose something or do not get for which acquisition they worked hard. The mystic's sole desire for which he meditates and contemplates is fulfilled and God is in him, with him, and for him, everywhere everytime. What for should he, then, fret and fume and get angry ? A mystic's angerlessness is thus a natural by-product of his full satisfaction with God's vision and grace. He seeks nothing from any body. It does not, however, mean that a mystic is never seen in a posture of anger, though anger is never integral part of his character. People there are who come to him mostly for worldly things and seldom for God's vision; they might have their own failings and misgivings and when a mystic, during the course of talking and enunciating the meaning and implication of scriptural texts, gives certain specific illustrations or glances hit-her and thither, the persons present, listening and seeing at him might harbour a feeling that the mystic is not pleased or is displeased with them. As a matter of fact, the mystic is concerned only with the Divine and nothing else; and even if a mystic makes expressions or utterances which seem angry, it shall be highly beneficial if the people begin to regard them as the expressions meant to correct, illumine and educate them on the path of divinity. A mystic is essentially godly and as good and gracious as God Is. He is beyond the 'opposites' or dualities of pleasure and displeasure, honour and dishonour etc. To be short, angerlessness is the lustre of the selfless universalism which is the crowning jewel of mystic's morality and is the manifestation of mystic's dispassion or desirelessness arising out of his Atmic life.

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1. Harbans Singh: Message of Sikhism, p 174, Sri Rag Guru III.

Non-contaminability

As is angerlessness the brilliance and hue of the mystic's jewel of selfless universalism, so is non-contaminability the lotus of mystical life in the mire of worldliness. A mystic may live in the forest or in the mountain-caves, but he lives in the world all right. Desireless as he is, there is in his heart no sense of possession which is the paramount bane of a monastic life. There is in him no sense of belonging at all, for he belongs to God who is the belonging of very few like him. As God is in every thing and every being and is yet invisible and un-encompassable by them, so lives mystic, the God-belonger, right in midst of worldly things and beings without being lured and polluted by any of them Where the Light of God is, there the thick pall of blackening Maya cannot be The soul shines in the mystic's body unhindered and uncovered by the clouds of ignorance Where the Sun is, the night is not, The mystical life is lotus like thus in the sense that though the mystic lives a midst people of gross worldliness, he does not belong to them, but serves them by imparting to them the light of True Knowledge in the same manner as the lotus goes on flooding the surrounding atmosphere with its sweet and refreshing fragrance Non-contaminability is the expression of mystic's inner purity which is the most gracious gift of his devotion and love for God It is born of 'Viveka'—the discretion of knowing and becoming Truth by heartful meditaion and soulful contemplation [1] Purity is thus the inner ornament of mystic's heart and non-contaminability is the sublimest expression of mystic's living in the world of worldy fellows A mystic is अलिप्त 'alipta' only on account of his being 'chatur' (the Wise Man-the Magi) i.e., on account of his seeing the vision of God in all the four quarters and of his intuitive introspection of the futility—because of utter perishability—of the worldly things, may be the riches power and beauty of any excellence.

Equanimity

Only the mystics who are dispassionate and 'alipta' have the treasure of perennial tranquility and contentment out of which rises the dispossition of equanimity. The excellence of equanimity is beyond all praise. Any one of this disposition is neither dejected in adversity nor elated in prosperity. He is affable to others and contented in himself. It is an attainable virtue and the mystics bear testimony to it, for they are indeed equanimous in the true sense of the term. Dr. Date calls it "one of the greatest spiritual characteristics" that evolve out of the supramental condition of the mystic.

1. Dr. V.H. Date: Yoga of the Saints, p. 188.

Since a mystic lives in the Root of Existence, he understands the essential import of praises and denunciations hurled at him. All praises go to God and all denunciatious return to their maker. The mystic in his Atmic state or 'the Brahmi-stithi', is deaf to both, but both the praises and censure are easily distinguishable in the light of his soul. For a mystic, far from being dull, is quick to discern the essence of both and rise far above them, not in the least touched by any. Both the praise and censure are at best the products of human intellect and, like the latter, both can never reach the Sun of Absolute Reality in and by whom the mystic lives.

Equanimity of a mystic lies undisturbed not only by the slings of censure and the puffs of praise but also by the sharp arrows of cupid darted by Beauty in human form. To a mystic, it is not the beauty of a face that first comes to his gaze, but the enchanting and all absorbing vision of God. Only after a little exertion the mystic, at the behest of the visitor or oncomer, may be able to see behind the vision of God a human face whose beauty pales into utter insignificance before the Beauty of the Vision[1]. The peerless beauty of the divine vision is so overpowering and attractive, that not the finest flower of human beauty can distract mystic's attention from his all time concern of contemplation. The mystic's love of God has nothing to do with human lust for beauty. All lust is born of desire for sex and, as already pointed out, the true mystic is desireless; for, immersion in the vision of God alone in his sole concern. The worldly beauty, however, glamorous, is perishable like all things of the world and is all destroyed in the mystical quest.

One thing is, however, true that when the self has realised the self and man has blossomed into full-fledged mystic, the entire universe looks as perfectly beautiful as God Himself is. And, as God is adorable so is the Beauty of Nature. As to Nanak the creation is perfect beauty because of God's all-pervasiveness, so also to the mystics all over the universe it has been an attractive home of God's beauty, presence and magnificance. Says Thomas Traherne: "You never enjoy the world aright, till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars,... till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold, and kings in sceptres, you never enjoy the world. The world is a mirror of infinite beauty; yet no man sees it. It is a temple of majesty, yet no man regards it. It is a region of Light and Peace." Only a mystic who lives this experience has perfect equanimity as the finest facet of his high moral existence.

1. Dr V.H. Date: Yoga of the Saints, p. 189.

Patience :

A mystic who acts with such superb equanimity of mind is a true yogin, but the stage of this excellence in disposition is attained leaving behind a prolonged and disciplined life of unfeinching faith and fortitude, patience and perseverance. It is certainly an uphill task, but it is humanly practicable. Any man has the potentiality of being a mystic, because the spark of divinity is already there in him. Any man can rise to the mystical heights scaled by even the highest of saints like Kabir, Tukaram, Ekanath, Jnaneswar, Veda Vyas, Nanak etc., provided they go the way by which each one of them climbed the cliffs of Supreme Spritual Consciousness. The first fundamental requisite of the finest moral fibre is thus patience which has to be gradually developed by fixing unshakable faiths in the Name imparted by the Guru, love of God and deep meditation with gratitude towards the Sadguru God tests His devotees; and a true aspirant, welcoming any adversity as a God-sent opportunity to reinforce his devotional meditation on the Divine Name, has to patiently rely absolutely on the good fortune of remembering Him with added love and gratitude. That p'eases the Master who, finding the devotee accept with glee and gratefulness all that befalls his lot—good or bad, sweet or bitter, blesses him with His vision and True Knowledge. A mastic is a perennial fount of patience and wisdom and whosoever comes in his contact will soon recognize in him this dominant note of patient obedience to the decrees of God. Obedience to God's will is impossible in want of the river of patience flooding the life of the mystic. It is, however, true that the mystic might not personally feel, in due course of time, that he is acting with patience. It becomes an easy virtue with him in the asset-side of his morality and develops into a promoting factor of inner purity. If adversity is a school of wisdom, patience is a teacher there. A mystic is both the school and teacher rolled into one. He is an institution of true patience and spiritual wisdom made flesh in human person.

Men of faith have put the highest premium on patience on the ground that 'everything comes if a man will only wait "[1] Patient waiting, urges Collier, is often the highest way of doing God's Will. Patience does not mean indifference. We may work and trust and wait, but we ought not be idle or careless while waiting That is the gist of a mystic's patience. Life has such hard conditions that every precious gift, every rare virtue, every genial endowment, love, hope, joy, wit, sprightliness, benevolence, must sometimes be put, says Gail

1. Tancred. p. 452. D of T.

Hamilton, into the crucible to distil the elixir called patience. As the mystic is ever spiritually active dynamo of human energy, his patience is not a passive moral trait only; it is, on the contrary, concentrated strength and an active virtue and goes with the dynamic act of one's resignation to God's Will. Resignation and patience are the pillars of human peace on earth. For, did not Decker say: "Patience! why, it is the soul of peace; of all the virtues, it is the nearest kin to heaven"? It is indeed the crowning quality of the mystic's moral life, for it strengthens the spirit and sweetens the temper.

Many men consider patience a common place virtue, but rightly appreciated it is grand and heroic For, without it the strongest character has a weak spot—for, is not impatience the ruin of strength; and with it the weakest has an element of invincibility of spirit. There are moments when God asks nothing of His children except silence, patience and prayerful tears. Said the great English poet Milton: "They also serve who only stand and wait." Patience is a sort of service of God, a service that pleases Him. The sum of patience as mystic's moral quality is that the aspirant—sadhak—must develop patience and go on meditating on the Name of God even when he is not immediately blessed by Him with the vision to contemplate upon. To very patiently and lovingly continue heartful meditation on the Divine Name is thus the quality the travellers on the mystic path must develop. If they fall a prey to impatience and give up meditation in want of the vision of God, then they will be the most accursed fellows on this earth; for they will not only lose the peace of the mind but lose the blessed and rare opportunity of realising their own selves. Patience is the noblest of moral characteristics of the followers of the mystical path as also of the mystics themselves. For, patience is the process of perfecting one's own self, it is also the diamond necklace of the mystics. Jesus bore the ignonimy and pangs of the cross and attained godly greatness.

Largeness of Heart

"Many reverence His miracles, few follow the ignonimy of His cross" wrote Thomas a Kempis. Only the courageous can endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others. Patience is the fragrance of the rose of mystical understanding, that the people in whom God lives are given to the frailties of the flesh and shall not be processed to perfection till they have realised Him; and that till they realise Him and become the Elect ones in the kingdom of God it is the solemn onus of the mystics to cover their defects by gently putting up with them in such a way that

they eventually correct themselves and become worthy of spiritual progress. Moreover, those things that a man cannot amend in himself or in others, he ought to suffer patiently, until God orders things otherwise Our common malady is that we would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our faults. With mystics however, the things are different. A mystic first perfects himself with patience and understanding and only thereafter he asks his followers to practice patience by accepting the disagreeable things or happenings in life as God-sent occasions to surrender and resign everything to His Will in the honour of His Name. As he has himself passed such trials and earned the Grace of God with the blessings of the Guru through intenser meditation and contemplation, so does he want the seekers of the Truth under the divine umbrella of his becoming to pass through the ordeals with patience and prayer by invoking His Grace. Patience is the spiritual stuff which, when sauced by tearful prayers, makes for mystic's divine diet yielding sweetness of disposition and strength of spirit.

Large-heartedness, Simplicity and Feeling of Gratitude

This sweetness of disposition and strength of spirit dismental the pettiness of mind and narrowness of heart, on the one hand, and develops to unimaginable degrees the openness of mind and largeness of heart, on the other. All those on the pathway to God have to imbibe these twin virtues with an ever increasing feeling of gratitude to the Guru and reliance on God The mystics of high order have these qualities in their full and never get tired of ascribing every little bit of what they are to the Grace of the Sadguru with a deep feeling of gratitude and utter humility. The mystic's gratefulness to the Guru finds majestic expression in his large-heartedness towards all those who meet him-whatever their motives and in his unassuming nature which makes his living sublime as well as simple. He is simple in his way of life; he is upright in his behaviour and sprightly in his movements; his dress is simple, his diet 'sattviki', his abode simple, spick nnd span; and his speech humble and sweet, illumining and impressive. A mystic's plain living and pure conduct is itself an index to the high ideal of which he is a veritable ambassador. It is this ideal living-in thought, word and deed-which endears to the heart of the multitudes and impresses upon them the mystic's large heartedness in dealing with them and their problems. In order to serve and alleviate the sufferings of people in general and of the fellows on the Path in particular, a mystic becomes as hard on himself as he grows soft and serviceable to others. It is so not as much because the 'other' ones

are suffering and are in need of service as because of his seeing the image of God in them, whom he runs to serve with love and forbearance. Since a saint does not regard himself separate from God, he regards service of God in all the suffering and the needy beings as a part of self-service. This loving attitude of the mystics makes him large-hearted, as large as the embrace of God permits.

Can he, who serves God in all names and forms, ever assume airs for what he does? It is self serving the self, God serving God. That is the reason perhaps why the ancient sages sang of 'Vasudhaiva-kutumbakam', of earth as a family unit; verily, the attitude of 'mine' and 'thine' is too lowly for a mystic to stick to. A devotee of God, mounted on high mystical hills of self-realisation, regards the entire cosmos as his own home where He resides and considers every act of his life as a dedication at His altar. Where humility and simplicity meet, there surges up in all spontaniety the broadness of vision and largeness of heart which are integral parts of the very nature and behaviour of a mystic. That is why Nanak wanted people to rise above the narrow communal grooves of which they were the horrible prisoners; to regard the considerations of high and low on the basis of caste as vain boasts fit to be cast aside as soon as possible; to understand that "no caste is acknowledged in the next world .. there new beings dwell,"[1] to realise the truth of Kabir's saying: "you may verify for yourself, God is there in every being. One and the same God lives both in Hindus and Turks;"[2] and to recognize the great spiritual truth that "caste and beauty do not accompany man after death; he will be dealt with according to his actions here"[3] Vain indeed are the distinctions based on caste and pedigree. Says Nanak: "Kshatriya" Brahman, Sudra and Vaishya! I address you all together".[4] "Caste and birth will not be of any avail; Go and ask those who know the Truth;"[5] "Ghee and milk, nobody calls by the name of the container in which they are kept; so is the case of the lover of God, in whatever cassette he may be found."[6]

A mystic is a rare God-man in this world of human beings, whose heart leaps out instantaneously to serve at the first shriek of the sufferer and knows no distinction of caste, colour, race, religion etc. All things that divide man against man and separate

1. Message of Sikhism, p. 99. Rag Asa, Guru I—by Harban Singh.
2. Ibid., Kabirji, Rag Asa.
3. Ibid , p. 98 Guru V. Rag Gauri.
4. Ibid., p. 100, Rag Sahi Guru I.
5. Ibid., Rag Prabhati Guru I.
6. Message of Sikhism, p. 99. Rag Tilang Guru I.

him from God are objects of mystic's quick renunciation. All things and disciplines which help man to live in harmony with his own self and the whole human race, nay, the whole creation of beings and non-beings, and to lead a unitive life in love of God constitute the core and contours of the mystical life, life of large hearted-ness and open and broad-mindedness. All this is in reality the natural development of the feeling of mystic's gratitude for the Guru and grace of God that descends on him. When one has made his residence in the Root of all things, one is bound to be as large-hearted, merciful and forgiving as God is. Gratitude and simplicity are the two facets of this very divine nobility and largeness of the mystic's heart.

Compassion, Devotion and Renunciation

Obviously, therefore, the mystic is compassionate because of his large-heartedness; devoted because of his deepseated love of God and gratitude for the Guru; and a true 'vairagi' (renouncer) because he has no personal motive to satisfy or any desire to fulfil. Whatever he does, says or thinks has roots only in his sovereign desire to serve God by inspiring and enabling people to recognize the cause of their suffering and realise the Root of happiness. To 'forget' God is to allow the law of karma to operate to your seemingly great and fleeting Joy or suffering or both; and to remember God is to let the Helping Hand of God rescue you from the sting of suffering and carry you to His Kingdom of Light, Grace and Joy Eternal. This is what the mystic tells with his heart full of wisdom and compassion for the alleviation of sorrow and promotion of the real well being of the people This is the 'ahetuki' (unmotivated) compassion or kindness with which the mystic is ever eager to awaken the people, enlighten and activise them on the path of God-realisation. Is not this the proof of the flooding devotion of the mystic's heart for God and of selfless compassion is the fragrance of this inward dedication of mystic's life for the divine cause. Writing on "Inward Dedication" Rhysbroeck scribbled: "If we wish to belong to God through inward dedication, we shall feel in the depth of our wills and in the depth of our love what may be called the welling up of a living spring, which will rise to eternal life."[1]

True, indeed, compassion, devotion, and renunciation are the three beautiful and glorious fruits of the tree of knowledge. A mystic is that Tree speaking of true renunciation. Nanak says that "renunciation is not a guise",[2] but an inner disposition to own

1. Quoted by Roman Roll-and in "The Life of Ramkrishna", p. 89.
2. Message of Sikhism, p. 102. Guru V. Rag Prabhati.

nothing but love of God, to live for nothing but realisation of the Truth, and become nothing but simply the voice of the legend, the flute under the fingers of Krishna, Rama or Allah i.e. God call Him by names. It is not leaving the house and going away into woods for God-realisation. Says Guru IX :

> "Why dost thou go to the forest in search of God ? He lives in all and is yet ever distinct; He abides with thee too, As fragrance dwell in a flower, And reflection in a mirror; So does God dwell inside everything; Seek Him, therefore, in thy heart "

Nanak's idea of renunciation is thus analogous to that enunciated by Lord Krishna in the Bhagawad Gita. Living even the life of a householder, man can realise God through the practice of real renunciation which follows the absolute resignation of man's efforts and fruits on God's Will. First of all, there is the renunciation of 'prohibited acts' such as theft, adultery, fraud, falsehood etc , prohibited by scriptures and saintly fellows. Secondly, there is the renunciation of acts performed for the satisfaction of 'worldly desires' e g. for gaining progeny, pelf etc. Thirdly, there is the renunciation of 'worldly thirsts' such as one for fame, honour, power, status, distinction etc. Fourthly, there is the renunciation of indolence and desire for fruit in the performance of all duties. Duty for duty's sake, which is its own award, is also the highest type of renunciation Fifthly, there is the renunciation of extracting service from others with a selfish motive The saints do not allow ever their disciples to do any personal service to them. The noblest service they expect from their disciples is to only practise the principles taught by them and ideals they themselves put into practice Sixthly, there is the renunciation of the senses of meum or 'mamkar' attachments with ones relations and things. Lastly, but not in the least, there is the renunciation of human egotism known as "Ahamkar" attachment focussed on man's own-self, own deeds, own prowess, own beauty, own greatness, own body. Though the renunciation of 'mamkar' is too difficult to achieve soon, the renunciation of 'Ahamkar' is the hardest to achieve–one may develop disgust for the wordly things and persons, but it well-nigh impossible for common man to get-rid of one's ego or of even bodily consciousness. Renunciation, in its true sense, should begin from the renunciation of one's own bodily consciousness. Renunciation of ego and means and implies the conquest of ego by heartful meditation and soulful contemplation. He whose heart is filled by God alone can be said to be egoless. Ego is dissolved in the meditational and contemplational absorption of devotee in

the love of God. For, true renunciation within comes only through the communion with the Name alone[1] Only in the garden of godly devotion the rose of renunciation outflowers to its full A mystic is the living embodiment of devotion, compassion and renunciation.

Centre of Satsang

Out of this deep devotion God and compassion for all beings in whom the mystic see God grows the pragrance of renunciation in the form of 'Satsang'. A mystic can not but sing the greatness and glory of God and thereby become the living centre of spiritual discourses or guidance. He talks to the people who come to him about the way they can reach and realise Him who is the root of real happiness. Who does not want abiding peace and happiness?Everybody does, but rarely one knows the path way to it The mystic speaks to people of this rarely known path and carries them on to it if they want him to. A mystic is saviour of friends "The saints are the true friends, for they alone inspire God intoxication "[2] They speak from the stand point of the soul to which learned philosophy has no access. All saints have borne out this truth [3] Sant Kirpal Singh says: "The true Master is one who himself quaffs the water of life-Truth and offers the same to others as well. He is competent to open the inner eye of the aspirants that may see the Light of God and also to unseal their ears so that they may hear the voice of God-the sound principle reverberating in all Creation."[4] "Verily, a true Master unveils the eye, And grants a glimpse of the true Adode."[5] One has, therefore, to speed up and seek refuge, guidance and light at the feet of such master mystics. For the essence of all 'Sat-Sang' —Holy congregation is to be in the company of God, the Truth. The mystic, who has the direct and intuitive apprehension of the Reality, can attune the heart and soul of the seeker to the current of the Supreme Truth. A mystic is 'Satsang' rendered flesh. He trades in truth,[6] in the Name of God. Says Guru Nanak: "Sat-Sang which is unison with truth, is that place and plane where no subject other than the Holy Nam or the Word is taught or explained." To be with such a mystic who is Word personified in all his talks and deeds is to be in real satsang.

'Sat' is therefore, the true test of a mystic's morality or immorality. To be godly is to be moral. For a mystic, who is

1. Jap ji, p, 95-by Kirpal Singh
2. Ibid. p 97. Rag Suhi M.I. Kirpal Singh.
3. Ibid. p. 97
4. Ibid. p 97
5. Ibid, p. 97
6. Nanak Vani p. 540. Ram Kali M.I. Sidh goshti.

above all the qualities or pairs of opposites, there is nothing like morality or immorality. He is all divine in his unitive life of love for God and identity with Him. The values of social Ethics lose significance and look pale before the spiritual glow of the godly grace which he represe ts in its fullness But it should in no way imply that he is dull to distinguish between morality and immorality by which people ordinarily judge the conduct of each other. His spiritual heights subsume all excellence of moral heights and make the latter meaningful. A Saint is moral man par excellence, but the reverse is no case true.

General Characteristics of a Mystic

A mystic is a God-man. A God-man alone can truly know a Godman. A true Master can not be known atonce. He is perfection in human frame, the destination of all. "Be ye perfect as thy father in Heaven is," said Jesus Christ. A mystic is perfection incarnate by virtue of his being ever with and in Him. Spiritually perfect, he is morally perfect too. He is perfection in all forms and in all ways. So much so that even when the physical frame is cast aside, the place, where the Master Mystic has had his communion with the word or God–realisation, gains a sanctifying and solace-affording power and halo par excellence. If per chance or by choice a pilgrim on the Path happens to visit that place and sit there in the silent meditation of the Name he will by the grace of God experience the spell of that power and halo immediately. It is said of all the true-saints, eastern or western, that even after their death, the aspirants on the path used to experience their vision of power in one form or the other. The saints donot die, they only give up their ghost and live in oneness with the Pure Spirit, and if and when the Sadhaks remember them with love and gratitude God does bless in various ways forms or vision. God does the work for the Saints

Besides, it is said of the great Saint Chokhamela that long after his mortal coil had fallen, his devotees used to hear the Name of God Echoing out of his body ceaselessly. The great ancient sage Veda Vyas records that even while Arjun was asleep the meditational name 'Krishna, Krishna' used to ringingly come out from the locks of Arjuna. It shows how soulful must have been Arjun's meditation on the Name of his Spiritual Teacher Krishna. Is it a miracle ? If so, it is a miracle only of the Divine Name Saints do no miracles They abstain from using the spiritual powers-Siddhis which the streaming communion with the Name conserve in them in its natural course. They might use them if God will or commands as in the case of Nanak, and God wills it only to purge out

the pride of a Sadhu, who has stuck up in the last sherd of ego at the treshold of God by the wanton use of such powers, so that he may make his final bid with His Grace to enter His Kingdom and become one with Him. His Elected one. May be that God willed in this case to let His Grace befall the famous 'Siddha' of the hillock through Nanak Deva and break the barriers of his 'Siddhis' and beacon him right into the Divine Court. The incident that has immortalised Nanak as 'Panja saheb' need not be narrated in details but may be taken as an instance on the point. God does miracles for his devotees. He may appear in the form of Nanak into the vision of any of the ardent devotees of Guru Nanak even today.

It is not the purpose of the work in hand to analyse miracles. The only point worth understanding is that the Spiritual spell of a true Mystic or Saint lives long after the saint or mystic is no more alive in the physical form. This is one of the major general characteristics universally verified as true in the case of the Saints of the East and West as well.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Having discussed the mystical, the moral and the general characteristics of a True Saint from a broad and comprehensive view point, it may yet remain to be answered as to how to find out whether or not one is a Saint or Saintly For, it is not enough to know the traits of a true mystic through the exercise of intellect only. As such, it might prove useful for the common Man eager to apply certain criterion and to arrive thereby at the understanding whether one, under scrutiny, is a Saint or not, to familiarize himself with the following broad hints

A Saint does not regard himself separate from God and regards every pore of Nature and person as the living abode of Truth, the Pure Spirit. As such, one will never be able to inhale the smell of selfishness from the life of a true Saint A Saint is, therefore, supremely contented in all circumstances and always 'जाह्री विधि र खैं राम, ताहि विधि रहिए' is the living essence of a Saint's character He lives in God and God lives in him and, therefore, he is ever gay and grateful to God, for his gaiety. Divine smile, joy alertness, agility and nimbless never forsake him. He speaks of Ram, sings to Ram and lives for Ram. So ever cheerful-ness and selflessness constitute the first half hall mark of a Saint which ordinarily any one of us may easily locate. But the most easy way of knowing a Saint is this. If by our coming in contact with a person (i) our meditation deepens, (ii) our contemplation endures, (iii) our experience and knowledge of the Truth increases, (iv) our learning and love of

Scriptures grows ever more, (v) regard for the elderly and the acknowledged high souled fellows steadily develops (iv) our remembrance of God gains loving continuity, our inner life of the mind and soul is gradually transformed and becomes ever purer, think that the man whose contact has spell these effects is a Saint. He is without pomp and show, and is simplicity and humility incarnate. As when a huge tree is full of fruits all over, it swoops down and any man underneath may pluck fruit, so also a mystic of spiritual fullness is always humble, sweet and fruitful to talk to. The Nectar Name is all out to ooze out of his body-though graceful glances, through honey packed ulterances, through the silently inviting divine glow on the forehead so on – and flow on to his visitors. Such a high souled saint always gives and never takes anything or service from any body; is ever thoughtful and competently active to only do good unto people despite then frailties and failings; and helps them know and realize the truth. He does all this with no motive other than his service to God whom he sees in all forms and names. Association with such saints is always highly elevating, enlightening and activizing on the path of God – realization As anything that comes in contact with fire gets burnt up, so any body who comes in contacts with saint finds his sins reduced to ashes A Saint is Pure and Perfect and, as such, he purifies and perfects any soul that has the fortune of getting his association He makes the man Guru - mukha and helps him realise God. Only in his association the man is enabled to see the light and hear the music Divine and enjoy the bliss of the fulfilment of life.

Thus it is that the Master said of such master mystics in the following terms :

"He who has known the Sat Purusha, is the True Master,
In His company alone a Sikh (devotee) is emancipated,
O Nanak ! he will see the Lord and sing praise of the Almighty.[1]

A mystics is one who has gone through the different stage of spiritual development and pilgrimaged the region of Pure Spirit, the Sat Naam, for beyond the hold of matter. Guru Nanak was a Saint of the highest order, the Param Sant, who reached the Region of the Nameless one, as is evidenced from his own divine utterance :

"Fly above the region of Truth, of the Pure Spirit, then reach the stage of the unknowable and the imperceivable. Above it, is the abode of Saints, and lowly Nanak, dwells over there".

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1. Gouri Sukhamani M.5.

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